

SECRET MEMOIRS
OF THE *Saint Petersburg*
COURT OF PETERSBURG:

PARTICULARLY TOWARDS THE END OF THE
REIGN OF CATHARINE II.

AND THE COMMENCEMENT OF THAT OF

PAUL I.

FORMING

A DESCRIPTION OF THE MANNERS OF PETERSBURG
AT THE CLOSE OF THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY;

AND CONTAINING

VARIOUS ANECDOTES,

COLLECTED DURING A RESIDENCE OF TEN YEARS IN THAT CAPITAL.

TOGETHER WITH REMARKS ON

THE EDUCATION OF THE GRAND-DUKES,
THE MANNERS OF THE LADIES, AND THE RELIGION OF THE PEOPLE.

TRANSLATED FROM THE FRENCH.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

LONDON:

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1800.

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REIGN OF CATHERINE II

PART I



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10, MARK LANE, 1800

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ADVERTISEMENT.

THE Publishers of the following Translation have been induced, by a sense of decency and propriety, to suppress or soften a few anecdotes contained in the original, the grossness of which would undoubtedly outrage the public and private feelings of Englishmen. In all other respects, the grand design, and the true colouring and shade of this interesting picture of the Semiramis of the North have been faithfully preserved. The lovers of biography will, it is hoped, now receive an unqualified gratification from the perusal of the following sheets; in which, not only the portrait of the principal personage is drawn by the hand of a master, but the delineations of the various characters connected with her history will be found marked by a superior

degree of knowledge and accuracy. The writer was well acquainted with the court, and was resident in the capital, and near the person of the empress, during the last ten years of her reign. In this work are developed the frailties, prejudices, and passions, of a woman whose public character cannot perhaps be too much exalted: who, in spite of her faults as a woman, was, as an empress, the arbitress of the fate of millions, the achievements of whose reign excited the astonishment of Europe, and whose memory will claim the admiration, and in many instances, the gratitude, of posterity.

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SECRET MEMOIRS,

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CHAP. I.

THE KING OF SWEDEN'S VISIT TO PETERSBURG.

Anecdotes respecting the marriage projected between him and the grand-duchess Alexandra—Portrait of the king, and of the young princess—Remarks on the failure of this match—German princesses sent for to Russia—Marriage of the grand-dukes, account of their brides, and pomp of the court at that period.

THE peace of Varela having reconciled Catharine and Gustavus, their conduct and attention towards each other formed a singular contrast with the hatred,

animosity, and invectives in which they had so profusely indulged during the war. The officers of the two nations were equally eager to display the esteem with which they had mutually inspired each other; for, the *Cossackines* of * Denisof excepted, this war was carried on in a manner very different from what was usual with the Russians: in the Swedes they found enemies, whose urbanity was equal to their valour; and the well-educated Russ, while he piques himself on the possession of these qualities, esteems them in others.

Count Stackelberg, so famous for his embassy, or rather his reign in Poland, was sent into Sweden; and Catharine,

* A Cossack general, who distinguished himself by his barbarity and ravages in the war in Finland. It is the same, or his nephew, who commands the corps of Don Cossacks marching into Germany. He is an ignorant man, but a resolute soldier and determined gambler.

who

who could not live in peace with her neighbours unless they were subject to her sway, or at least at her devotion, sought new means of re-establishing her interest in that country, which the talents and firmness of Gustavus had destroyed. To marry one of the young grand-duchesses to the prince-royal then became her favourite project; and it is even said that this matrimonial alliance was a secret article in the treaty of peace. This at least is certain, that the grand-duchess Alexandra was educated and trained up to the expectation of being one day queen of Sweden; while every person about her confirmed her in the idea, and entertained her with the charms and early ripening accomplishments of the young Gustavus. Even the empress herself frequently jested with her upon the subject. One day she opened a port-folio containing portraits of several unmarried princes, and pressed her to point out which of them

she should like best for a husband. The child, blushing, chose the portrait of him of whom she had heard so many fine things, and who was already the lover of her rising imagination. The good old lady, not considering that her granddaughter could read, and knew the prince of Sweden by his name at the bottom of the picture, persuaded herself that sympathy had decided in his favour, and pursued her scheme with additional pleasure.

It is equally certain, that several persons about the young Gustavus endeavoured to inspire his heart with similar sentiments; but I know not whether the king his father, absolute and despotic as he was, would have given his consent to the match, as suitable to the young lovers, as it would be the reverse to the two countries. Be this as it may, the violent and sudden death of Gustavus frustrated the schemes of Catharine, whose
design

design had been no less than to send him at the head of his Swedes into France, there to act the same part as Gustavus Adolphus and Charles XII. had done in Germany and Poland, in the hope that he would there meet with a similar fate; while she prepared for that of regent over the minority of an orphan king in Sweden, whom, together with his kingdom, she would have taken under her maternal care.

But the duke of Sudermania, having seized the reins of government during the minority of his nephew, displayed sentiments diametrically opposite to the Russian system. Less gallant than his brother, he did not feel himself disposed to sacrifice his country to the ladies; and failed not to repay, with reciprocal sentiments, the hatred which Catharine had conceived for him during the war, when the noise of his cannon had reached the inmost recesses of the palace of the tzars.

This

This naval war, in which however he had little reason to boast of his success, had irritated him against the Russians; and he was not ignorant of the raillery and invective which were liberally bestowed on him at the court of Petersburg, or that plays were even acted at the Hermitage, in which he was held up as an object of ridicule.

The vilest corruption, the basest and most cowardly intrigues, were employed against him. Europe even saw, with fresh horror, a woman, who pretended to be an image of God adored on the throne, exciting revolt in a nation, buying traitors, and paying—assassins. To remove the regent, substitute a council of her creatures in his stead, and harness Sweden to her chariot by the side of Poland, were the objects at which she aimed, and which she sought to attain by all the means that could be devised. Stackelberg, whose wit and urbanity had charmed

charmed the king *, and who, to use his own words, found in that prince *a true and worthy knight of his immortal sovereign*, demanded to be recalled. His haughtiness could not stoop to act a part of little consequence with the regent of a young king, after having himself been so long regent of an old king of Poland.

M. Romanzof, brother of him who was so well known and esteemed in Germany, succeeded him; but, notwithstanding

* Of all the ministers employed by Catharine, count Stackelberg has the most wit and the most pride; and this he displayed particularly in Poland. M. von Thugut being sent to that country by the emperor, when he was to have his audience of Poniatofski, was introduced into a saloon, where, seeing a man gravely seated, and surrounded by Polish lords respectfully standing before him, he took him for the king, and began his complimentary speech. It was Stackelberg, who was in no hurry to set him right. Thugut, informed of his mistake, was vexed and ashamed. In the evening, being at cards with the king and Stackelberg, he played a card, saying, "The king of clubs."—"You are wrong," said the king, "it is the knave." The Austrian ambassador, pretending to have been mistaken, answered, flapping his forehead,

ing his ingenuity, his instructions were too glaring and treacherous for him to acquire similar respect in Sweden. The plots and intrigues of which the regent complained, soon required his recal. Who has not felt indignation at the impudence with which Armfeldt was set on, protected, and defended by Russia, in spite of the obvious proofs of his attempts, and the most forcible claims? At the very time when all the kings in Europe seemed to make a common cause to hunt in concert every man who was

head, "Ah, fire, pardon me; this is the second time
"to-day I have taken a knave for a king." Stackelberg, ready as he was at repartee, could only bite his lips. When he returned from Sweden, his time was spent loitering in the antichambers of Zubof. He was always one in Catharine's little parties, however, and was thus reduced to amuse, after having served her. His great humiliation no doubt was that of being named by Paul lord of the bed-chamber in waiting to the very king of Poland who had frequently danced attendance in his anti-chamber at Warsaw. In this malicious appointment of the emperor there was something ingenious and noble that does him honour.

barely

barely suspected of rebellion, a regent of Sweden in vain demanded, from court to court, a man who had conspired against his life and the government of his country, which he would have sold and delivered to a foreign power. From court to court his demands were evaded in an insulting manner; and Armfeldt at length retired to Russia to set him at defiance, being allowed to appear at court, receiving a pension, and living there even during the visit of the king and the regent*.

I shall not trace this plot, which so long engaged the court of Sweden, through all its ramifications, or name all the agents who were still employed to carry it on; but Catharine did not relinquish her design of ruling there, of acting the part of protectress to the young king, and of exhibiting the regent as a tyrant who abused the

* In 1798 he was at Carlsbad, worn out with infirmities, and despised by all that knew him.

minority of his nephew, or a jacobin who intended to imitate the duke of Orleans. She even sent the king an invitation to come and put himself under her protection, or at least to pay her a visit; and nothing was left untried to get him to Petersburg without his uncle. It is surprising that the regent was not driven to extremities. Among the papers of the accomplices of Armfeldt were found several which would have made Catharine appear despicable in the eyes of all Europe; but he did not make them public:—was it from fear, weakness, or moderation?

He was at the point, however, of entering into an alliance with France, which to him seemed the most effectual step towards securing the independence of Sweden against the unbounded ambition of a powerful neighbour; concluding, that whatever connections might be formed between Sweden and Russia, excited by

by private passions or temporary interests, would still prove injurious to the former.

To strike at the root of Catharine's hopes, the regent took another step, which was still more sensibly felt. He demanded in marriage for his young pupil one of the princesses of Mecklenburg, who was solemnly betrothed to him, and the match was announced in form to all the courts of Europe. Count Schverin, who had already been in Russia, where his person had gained him many friends among the ladies, was dispatched to Petersburg with this commission ; but at Viborg he found an order from the empress, which forbade him to make his appearance at court. This was certainly strange conduct, and displays rather the pique of an irritated woman than the reserve of a sovereign. What ! because the king of Sweden had espoused another princess instead
of

of her grand-daughter, she refused to receive the notification conformably to established custom! A forsaken mistress, who paid no regard to decorum, and was destitute of true pride, could have done no more. The respect she owed herself, her sex, and above all her amiable grand-daughter, should at least have saved her from the humiliation of thus publishing her chagrin. On this occasion she ceased to act the part of the *great Catharine**.

To account for this step, no less insulting than indelicate, she directed her *chargé des affaires*, or rather *d'intrigues*, at Stockholm, to deliver to the regent that note which has been read with astonishment in some of the public papers, where she not only made the duke of Sudermania's maintaining the connexion be-

* The Russians have aggrandized even her name; they say, in their language, *Yekatarina*, which can only be translated *Arch-Catharine*.

tween Sweden and France a crime of *treason to her imperial majesty*, but even seems to insinuate, that he was privy to the assassination of the king his brother, the avenging of which she claims to herself. The vexation of Catharine, and folly of her ministers, went still further. Every thing announced, that they were about to treat the king of Sweden like Sganarelle*, by obliging him at the cannon's mouth to break his engagement to the princess of Mecklenburg, and marry the grand-duchess Alexandra †. The amiable qualities of

* In *L'Amour Medicin* of Moliere.—T.

† Some planks were laid at that time with great noise and preparation on the ice of the Neva, strong enough then to bear castles, to facilitate, as was said, the passage of the artillery which was going to be sent into Finland. The ministers and generals talked publicly of the approaching war; a proof, that it was all a deception: but whether M. Steding were a dupe to it, I do not pretend to say. Prince George Dolgoruky, a general too honest and too little of a courtier to be employed by the favourites, was even sent to the frontiers by way of scarecrow.

this

this princess would have justified a young king in fighting to obtain her hand rather than to escape it. A report was also spread, that the king was already enamoured of her; that his uncle had done violence to his inclinations; and that he wished for nothing more than to defer his marriage with the princess of Mecklenburg till he became of age, that he might then declare in favour of the other lady who aspired to his hand.

There is no doubt, that several Swedes, gained over by the promises of Catharine, and by the hopes they had formed from the munificence of that ostentatious princess, endeavoured to inspire the young king with such resolutions, and to excite in his heart the same passion, as had been raised in that of the amiable Alexandra. A regular correspondence was even kept up between Schverin, Steinbach, and some persons who had access to the grand-duchesses; and several of the letters were
shewn

shewn to the empress through the medium of madame Budberg, chief governess to the princesses.

After such violent proceedings against the regent, who could expect to see him bend, and submit? This, however, he did: at least he suffered himself to be either frightened or bribed*. M. Budberg, who had just made the tour of Germany to

* A Genevese, of the name of Christian, formerly the right hand and secretary to Calonne, being at Stockholm, introduced himself to the regent by means of a fable, which he composed in his praise. As he had been at Petersburg, he talked to him a great deal of Catharine, of the young princesses, of the esteem in which he was held at that court, and of the advantage of an alliance with Russia, by marrying the king to the grand-duchess. Being persuaded from the duke's answers, that he was not very averse to a reconciliation with Catharine, he sent information of it to La Hufs, Markof's mistress; and upon these grounds the negotiations which had been broken off were renewed. Christian returned to Petersburg, to reap the rewards of his address; but the death of the empress deprived him of the recompense he expected.

find

find a wife for the grand-duke Constantine, having brought with him the princess of Cobourg and her three daughters, was deemed capable of surmounting the difficulties experienced in obtaining a husband for the young grand-duchess. At first he repaired to Mecklenburg, to negotiate a renunciation; and was then sent to Stockholm as an ambassador. Threats, promises, and money at length prevailed: Catharine obtained the point of the king's marriage being deferred till he should be of age; and the regent, willing, no doubt, to shew that his pupil was free in his choice and in his conduct, at length consented to make a journey, whither he was so kindly invited. The affair of the marriage, which was the true motive of this invitation, was touched but slightly, sentimentally.—*If, as they say, the two children love each other already; if, when they see each other, they should still prove mutually*

tually agreeable; we will consider of the means of rendering them happy. Such was the language of the empress. If she could get the king to her court, Catharine thought she should have the game in her own hands. Reckoning on the charms of the princess, and the kindnesses which she herself should lavish on the king, the regent, and their suite, she doubted not but the young Gustavus, after having seen her whom he had ventured to refuse for reasons of state, would give both the kingdom and the glory of Charles XII. to possess such a bride.

On the 25th of August 1796, he arrived at Petersburg with his uncle and a numerous suite, and alighted at the house of M. Steding, his ambassador. All the city was anxious to see the young monarch. The empress, who was at her palace of Tauris*, came to that of the Hermitage

* The empress had purchased Tauris, the principal palace of Potemkin; and in honour to the memory of

Hermitage to receive him, and give him entertainments. At their first interview she appeared enchanted, and *almost in love with him herself**. He would have kissed her hand; but she would not allow it, saying, "No, I cannot forget that the count von Haga is a king."—"If your majesty," answered he, "will not give me permission as empress, at least allow me as a lady, to whom I owe so much respect and admiration."

The interview with the young princess was still more interesting. Both were extremely embarrassed; and the eyes of all the court being turned towards them,

this celebrated favourite, whom she regretted, she gave his surname to this palace, where she resided in the spring and autumn. It is at Petersburg, a short league (a mile and two thirds) from the winter palace, and like it situated on the banks of the Neva. It was in this superb edifice, that Potemkin gave his sovereign that magnificent and so much celebrated entertainment in 1791.

* These were her very words.

their confusion increased. No doubt each found the other worthy of the sentiments with which they had been inspired from infancy ; and there is reason to believe, that, if motives of state on the part of the king of Sweden, or the whims of the present emperor, prevent not the match from being brought to a conclusion, the most charming of princesses will be likewise the most unhappy.

No one, however, has more claims to happiness than Alexandra Pavlovna. At fourteen she was already tall and womanly : her figure was noble and majestic, softened by all the graces of her sex and age : her features were regular, and her complexion fair as alabaster : innocence, candour, and serenity, stamped their divine impressions on her brow ; and light flaxen hair, which seemed always arranged by fairy hands, fell in ringlets on her well-turned neck. Her heart, her talents, and her intellect, were in unison

with her exterior appearance. Miss Wil-
lamof, her private governess, had culti-
vated the noblest and purest sentiments in
her mind. Exquisite sensibility, judgment,
and understanding, distinguished her in-
fancy, and excited the admiration of all
who came near her.

It was difficult to find, I will not say a
king, but a young man, more interesting,
better educated, and of so great promise as
the king of Sweden. He was seventeen
years of age, tall and finely shaped, with
an air of nobleness, intelligence, and mild-
ness: yet there was something of gran-
deur and stateliness about him, notwith-
standing his age; and he had all the
graces of youth, without the awkwardness
that usually attends it. His manners
were simple, though courteous and polite.
Whatever he said was spoken with reflec-
tion. To serious things he paid an atten-
tion not expected from youth: he dis-
played knowledge, that announced a very
careful

careful education : and a certain gravity, that bespoke his rank, never forsook him. All the pomp of the Russian empire, which was sedulously exhibited to his view, seemed in nowise to dazzle him. In that brilliant and numerous court, he soon appeared more at ease than the grand-dukes themselves, who knew not how to converse with any person ; so that both court and city soon drew comparisons between them very flattering to the young stranger. The empress herself could not conceal the pain she felt at the disparity between him and the second of her grandchildren, whose brutal and rude boyish tricks offended her to such a degree, that she put him under arrest once or twice during the stay of the king of Sweden *.

All

* On several occasions, when the king appeared in public with the grand-dukes, foreigners were shocked, and the honest Russians humbled, at the courtly demeanour of the former, contrasted with the rustic behaviour of the latter. At a review

All the great men of the empire were eager to participate in the joy of Catharine, who selected such as should give entertainments to her young guest, and fixed the days. Counts Stroganof, Ostermann, Besborodko, and Samoilof, distinguished themselves by the sums they expended, and the magnificence they displayed. The courtiers sought to surpass each other in the richness of their dress, and the generals in the military spectacles which they exerted themselves in exhibiting to the king. The old general Melissino particularly distinguished himself by

view of the corps of cadets of the artillery, where the young Gustavus appeared attentive to every thing most worthy of notice, conversing with the generals around him, and with the grand-duke Alexander, who was appointed to do the honours of the empire, the grand-duke Constantine was running and bawling behind the soldiers, imitating them in a burlesque manner, threatening them, and even beating them. It is certain, that the king of Sweden left Petersburg as well acquainted with the city, as those who were one day to reign there.

the

the manœuvres and artificial fireworks executed and played off under his direction. Gustavus was in a state of continual enchantment; yet he wisely employed his mornings in traversing the city on foot with the regent, and seeing every thing that could be interesting or instructive. Everywhere he put such questions, or gave such answers, as shewed the understanding he possessed, and the education he had received.

The regent, who appeared to enjoy the honour of his labour in the approbation bestowed on his pupil, is a very little man. His manners are easy and polished; he has an air of acuteness and observation; his eyes are sparkling and full of fire; everything he says displays the man of understanding, and excites reflection in those who hear him.

It may readily be supposed, that during this succession of entertainments, the two lovers had frequent opportunities of seeing each

each other, converſing and dancing together: they became familiar, and appeared mutually enchanted. The aged Catharine aſſumed an appearance of youth, and again indulged in thoſe ſcenes of joy and pleaſure which ſhe had long ſince renounced. The approaching marriage was no longer a ſecret; it was the common topic of converſation. The emperſs already ſpoke to the young king and her grand-daughter as betrothed lovers, and encouraged them to mutual affection. One day ſhe made them give the *firſt kiſs of love* in her preſence: the firſt, no doubt, that the virgin lips of the young princeſs ever received; and which may have left a pleaſing and cheriſhed impreſſion, that will long render her unhappy.

In the meantime ſteps were taking to bring this deſired match to a concluſion. The only difficulty which preſented itſelf, was that of religion. Catharine had felt the pulse of her court on this ſubject; and

and even consulted the archbishop, to know, whether her grand-daughter might abjure the orthodox faith. Instead of answering in the way in which she flattered herself he would have done, he merely replied : “ Your majesty is all powerful.” The chief patriarch of Russia, not finding himself supported by the opinions of his clergy, whom he expected would be more tractable, was then desirous of appearing more Russian than the Russians themselves ; and, to flatter the national pride, rather than from respect to the Greek church, resolved to make a queen of Sweden of the Greek religion. In proportion as this appeared new and humiliating to the Swedish nation in the eyes of the patriarch, the more flattering was it to his vanity, and that of his ministers : besides, the popes, chaplains, and others, whom it would place about the young queen, would be trusty persons, and well calculated to keep the princess in the interests

interests of Russia. The king was enamoured, dazzled: the regent appeared to be completely gained: could it then be supposed that they would reject this arrangement, after such decisive steps had been taken? In the private conversations that had passed, this delicate subject had been but slightly touched upon: it was scarcely expected that Catharine would have any scruples; and the king had hinted, that, from respect to the Russian nation and the prejudices of the people, the princess should not be obliged to abjure the Greek religion in form. The empress, persuaded that there was no room for retreat, left to her favourite ministers Zubof and Markof the care of drawing up the contract conformably to her views. On the other hand, the Swedish ambassador demanded the princess in marriage, at an audience which was given him for the purpose of making the demand in form; and the day and hour

hour on which the parties were to be publicly betrothed, were fixed.

This day, which was the 21st of September, exposed the happy and imperious Catharine to the greatest chagrin and humiliation she had ever experienced. The whole court received orders to assemble in full dress in the apartment of the throne. The young princess, habited as a bride, and attended by her sisters, the grand-dukes and their wives, and all the ladies and gentlemen, with the grand-duke, father to the princess, and the grand-duchess, who came from Gatchina to be present at the ceremony of betrothing their daughter, were assembled by seven o'clock in the evening. The empress herself arrived in all imaginable pomp. No one was wanting but the young bridegroom, whose tardiness at first excited astonishment. The repeated going out and coming in of prince Zubof, and the impatience which the empress exhibited, soon excited the curiosity

sity and whisperings of the ladies. “What
“is the matter? Is the king taken ill?
“He is not very gallant, however.—How
“could he dare thus to make the sove-
“reign wait, in the apartment of her
“very throne, and with all her court
“assembled!” The king, however, ex-
pected like the spouse of the eleven thou-
sand virgins, did not appear.

The following was the occasion of this
strange delay. The king was to have
been at court at seven in the evening.
At six, the minister Markof brought him
the contract and the articles of alliance,
which he had just drawn up with Zubof.
Gustavus having read them over, appear-
ed greatly astonished on finding they con-
tained articles on which he had not
agreed with the empress; and asked,
whether it were from her that they were
brought to him to sign*?

Markof

* These articles were, that the princess should have
her private chapel and clergy in the royal palace, be-
sides

Markof answering in the affirmative, the king replied, that he could not possibly comply. He observed, that he would lay no restraint on the conscience of the princess; that she might profess her own religion in private, but he could not allow her either a chapel or priests in the palace: on the contrary, in public, and in all outward ceremonies, she must profess the religion of the country. The reader may conceive the surprize and embarrassment of Markof: he was obliged to take up his papers, and return to Zubof, to inform him that the king refused his signature. He soon after returned in the greatest agitation, to say, that the empress was already in the apartment of the throne, surrounded by all her court; that it was no longer possible to speak to her; that she waited for the king; and that he flattered himself he would

side certain engagements into which the Swedes were to enter against France, which have been kept very secret.

not

not bring the affair to an open rupture, which would be an unheard-of insult to his sovereign, and to the whole empire. Besborodko, and several others, arrived in succession, exhorting, urging, praying the king to yield. All the Swedes who were called in inclined the same way. The regent contented himself with saying, that it depended on the king; drew him aside, and took a turn round the room with him, appearing himself to press him, while speaking to him in a low voice. The king answered aloud, "No, no, I will not; I cannot; I will never sign them!" He withstood all the remonstrances, all the importunities of the Russian ministers; and at length, vexed at the pertinacity with which they beset him, he retired to his chamber, and fastened the door, after giving again a clear and peremptory refusal to sign anything inconsistent with the laws of his country. The Russian ministers re-
2 remained

mained stupified at the audacity of a boy, who dared thus resist their sovereign, and concerted how to break the catastrophe to her.

If the firmness which the young Gustavus displayed on this occasion were *his own*; if the solicitations which his counsellors appeared to make, were not feigned, he has given his nation a proof of the greatest character, which cannot be too highly admired in a young prince of seventeen, whom, it might be expected, love alone would have been sufficient to subdue. It is to be presumed, however, for the honour of the regent, that the entreaties which he appeared to use with his nephew were insincere; and that he wished only to charge the obstinacy of the king with a resistance which would probably have drawn upon himself the immediate vengeance of Catharine. Most of the Swedes who attended Gustavus were actually bribed or seduced: being
young

young courtiers, their expectations were highly raised on the wedding gifts, and they were much mortified at the disappointment. Steding, the ambassador, had a difficult part to act: but M. Flemming publicly declared his sentiments, by saying, that he would never advise the king to act contrary to the laws of his realm.

These debates between the ministers of the empress and the king continued till near ten o'clock. Catharine and her court were still waiting: but at last it was necessary to inform her, that the affair was broken off. She rose, attempted to speak, but her tongue faltered; was like to faint; and even had a slight fit, the precursor of that which carried her off a few weeks after. The empress withdrew, and the court was dismissed, under pretence of a sudden indisposition of the king. Some were offended at the audacity of a petty king of Sweden: others blamed the imprudence

dence of the wife Catharine, who had so lightly exposed herself to such a scene; but the presumption of Zubof and Markof, who had pretended to impose on the Swedes by their cunning, and who had thought of procuring a matrimonial contract to be signed without being read, was particularly censured.

The most interesting victim was the amiable Alexandra. She had scarcely strength to enter her apartment; and there, no longer able to restrain her tears, she gave herself up, before her governesses and maids of honour, to a grief that affected all about her, and rendered her truly ill. The next day but one after this unexpected affair, was the birth-day of the grand-duchess Anne Feodorovna*: the etiquette of the court prescribed a ball, but no person would dance. The

* The wife of the grand-duke Constantine, daughter of the prince of Saxe Cobourg.

king went to it however, and the empress also made her appearance for a moment, but did not speak to him. Zubof did not even conceal his anger against the young monarch. Embarrassment was visible on every countenance. Alexandra, being ill, was not present. The king danced with the other princesses, conversed a moment with the grand-duke Alexander, and retired early, saluting every person with still more politeness than usual. This was the last time of his appearance at court.

These public days of pomp and festivity were suddenly changed into those of retirement and irksomeness. Never were any so melancholy and unpleasant spent by a king at a foreign court. Every person was ill, or pretended to be so. The interest that Alexandra had inspired, and Gustavus merited, softened every heart in their favour. She was pitied, as the victim of vanity and folly:
he,

he, for being obliged to make a sacrifice that must have cost him so dear*. Execrations were openly bestowed on Zubof and Markof. The conduct of the empress, who gave herself up to the most dreadful chagrin, appeared inexplicable. It is said, that her humbled favourites took the liberty of hinting to her to use force with the young prince, who was in her power. She went and shut herself up a whole day, almost alone, in her palace of Tauris, under pretence of celebrating the foundation of her chapel, but in fact to conceal from the eyes of her court the trouble that afflicted her, and to consult with her clergy and favourites on the embarrassing situation in which she fancied herself placed.

* He has since married the young princess Frederica of Baden, sister of the grand-duchess Elizabeth. Notwithstanding the charms of his young bride, it is supposed that he is not happy with her; and it is to be feared that Alexandra, who, it is said, is to be married to an arch-duke of Austria, will not be more so.

Endeavours were made to bring the affair a little in train again. The king saw her still in private, and the ministers held several conferences. Gustavus at length eluded the business, by declaring, that as he could not grant what the empress desired according to the laws of Sweden, he would refer the matter to the different estates that would be assembled at his coming of age; and if the estates consented to have a queen of the Greek religion, he would then send for the princess. It was rather inconsistent with Russian politics to hear a king hold such language; and it is said that an attempt was made, but in vain, to excite him to set the estates at defiance, offering him the forces necessary to punish them if they should *revolt*. The king, however, would assent to no other terms.

Such was the result of this journey, upon which the public papers scarcely ventured

ventured to comment. The king quitted Petersburg the very day on which the anniversary of the birth of the grand-duke Paul * was celebrated, one week after the breach; leaving the empress replete with ill-humour and resentment; and in the heart of the young princess an equal degree of grief and of love, which were clearly perceptible by a lingering disease that succeeded, and in the general regret and esteem of the public. Notwithstanding this unforeseen catastrophe, in order to prevent any remarks, presents were made on both sides; and the Russians were so much the more surprised at the splendor and taste displayed in those of the king of Sweden, as they had affected always to speak of him by the epithet of *the poor little boy*.

If little has been said of the grand-duke

* The present emperor: is the 20th of September, old stile, or the 1st of October, new stile.

Paul

Paul on this occasion, it is because he had no more to do in what concerned his children than in the affairs of state. He was at his seat of Gatshina, and was seen at Petersburg only once or twice during the time of the king's stay, which was about six weeks. The grand-duchess, his wife, on the contrary, made that tiresome and fatiguing journey three or four times a week, to be present at the entertainments given, and maintain, in appearance at least, the rights and duties of a mother. This worthy princess said, "If all my daughters cost me so much pains to provide them husbands, I shall die on the road." Once, for form's sake, the king was at Gatshina and at Pavlofsky. Paul and the regent seemed by no means congenial to each other; and on this occasion he appeared to be of his mother's opinion, and even to surpass her in his scruples and devotion to the orthodox Greek faith. It is
not

not improbable, however, but the whims of Paul may throw as many obstacles in the way of his daughter's happiness, as the vanity of Catharine, and the unskilfulness of her ministers*: the dress of the Swedes, their short coats, cloaks, ribands, and round hats, are all of them his utter aversion.

* Some time after his accession to the throne, Paul, going into the apartment of his daughters, began to joke with one of their maids of honour on the subject of her approaching marriage. "As to my daughter "Alexandra," added he, "she cannot be married, "for her lover has not yet learned to write." The fact was, he had just received a letter from the king of Sweden, whose secretary had omitted in the address some of the Emperor's titles; among others, the perfectly new one of the duke of Courland, &c. That no one in future might be guilty of this neglect, Paul issued a particular ukase, in which he prescribed at full length the manner in which he chose to be named; and, as if the vast Russian empire stood in need of Spanish amplifications to make it appear great and powerful, he took the titles of all the ancient principalities: those, by which it is his pleasure to be addressed even in a petition, are sufficient to fill a good page.

The

The forced failure of this marriage has truly overwhelmed with ridicule the Russian ministers; and it must have been very humiliating to the old empress to have suffered such wretched means to have been employed. Does it not appear much beneath the Russian empire to show itself so embarrassed about the settlement of its amiable princesses, and to play off so many great and little tricks to provide them husbands? It is true, that the unbounded ambition of Catharine seems to have exerted itself to render their marriage difficult: like mademoiselle Montpensier formerly, she has killed their husbands with cannon-balls. A king of Poland, a duke of Courland, or even a hospodar of Moldavia: such were the husbands she might have left them.

Let the destiny reserved for the grand-duchesses, however, be what it may, they will undoubtedly be happier than the German princesses married in Russia,
most

most of whom have experienced the most wretched fate. The fearful lot of Sophia of Brunswick, the wife of the miserable tzarovitch Alexis, is well known. That of the regent Anne, the unfortunate mother of Ivan III, was still more melancholy. Even the great Catharine herself, I hope, will not be urged as an exception: though surrounded with all the splendor of her court, yet the untimely death of her husband secretly preyed on her mind. The only exception that can be made to this series of unfortunate brides, is Elizabeth of Baden-Dourlach, whose character, and particularly that of her husband, the grand-duke Alexander, seem to promise her a more happy life*.

* Even this exception seems now to have ceased: as, in consequence of the king of Sweden's intermarriage with her sister, a restraint, if not a total prohibition, is put upon her correspondence with her family.

Young and affecting victims, whom Germany seems to send by way of tribute to Russia, how often do you bedew in secret with your tears the gilded apartments in which you dwell ! How often are your thoughts cast with regret on the loved abodes where you spent your infant years ! Would not those you might have passed in the arms of a husband in your own country, in a climate favoured by heaven, amid a people more polished and more happy, at a court less pompous and less corrupt, have been far preferable ? Those chains you wear are but the more heavy for being of gold : the pomp that surrounds you, the riches with which you are decked, are not yours, for you enjoy them not. If love embellish not by his illusions the abode of wearisomeness and constraint in which you dwell, it will soon become to you a gloomy prison. Your lot unquestionably

ably merits the compassion of those who envy it.

What may not be said of the want of pride in those German princes who send their daughters to Russia, to undergo the almost equal hazard of being chosen or rejected? She that is approved is unhappy, and they who are sent back are insulted; for the dowry given them, and the riband with which they are decorated, are but proofs that they have been offered, examined, and rejected. The mother of these princesses usually accompanies her daughters in this distant journey, thus to dispose of one of them by exposing them all to a degrading choice. The times are certainly much changed. When the tyrant Ivan Basiliovitch (Basilides), desirous of forming an alliance with one of the princes of Europe, sent to Augustus Sigismund, king of Poland, to demand his sister in marriage, his ambassador was dismissed with a gray mare dressed

dressed like a woman. This piece of raillery was worthy of the age, and, no doubt, of the idea then entertained of a *veliki-kniaz*, or grand-prince of Russia. Now, at the first beck of a Russian autocrat, the German princes hasten to send their amiable daughters, with their mothers, that the *veliki-kniaz* may choose such as they like, and send back the rest covered with confusion, which neither their ribands, nor jewels, nor rubles, can conceal. How, let me repeat, can the princes of Germany submit to this dastardly tribute, pay so little respect to decorum, and so wound the delicacy of their children !

Of all the victims thus led into * Russia,
the

* Catharine has sent for eleven German princesses to provide wives for her sons or grandsons : three princesses of Darmstadt, brought by their mother ; three princesses of Wurtemberg, but these came no farther than Prussia, Frederic the *unique* insisting that the grand-duke should be gallant enough to meet them half way ; two princesses of Baden ; and three princesses

the two young princesses of Baden-Dourlach appeared the handsomest and most interesting. Their mother, by birth princess of Darmstadt, had already been sent thither in her youth with her sisters, one of whom became Paul's wife. This princess, an amiable woman, and worthy mother of a charming family, would not appear again with her daughters on a stage on which she herself had been exposed, but entrusted them to the care of the countess Schuvalof, widow of the author of the Epistle to Ninon, who was charged with the negociation, together with one Strekalof, whose conduct might be assimilated to that of a Cossack sent to Georgia to carry off maidens for the seraglio of the sultan.

cesses of Cobourg, conducted also by their mother. The young king of Sweden has made three journies out of his kingdom to choose himself a wife, while three princesses have been sent from the farther part of Germany for a junior grand-duke of Russia!

These

These princesses, after a long and tedious journey, arrived at night, towards the end of autumn 1792, and in terrible weather, which seemed materially to affect them. They were made to alight at the palace in which Potemkin had resided, where they were received by the empress, accompanied by Miss Branicka, her favourite. At first the young princesses took the latter for the empress; but the countess Schuvalof having undeceived them, they threw themselves at the empress's feet, and with tears kissed her robe and her hand, till she raised them up and embraced them: they were then left to sup in full liberty.

The next day Catharine came to see them, while they were yet at their toilette, and presented them the riband of the order of St. Catharine, jewels, and stuffs. She also examined their wardrobe, and on seeing it, said, "My young friends,
" when

“when I arrived in Russia I was not so
“rich as you*.”

The young grand-dukes were introduced to them the same day. The eldest, who already suspected the motive of their arrival, had a pensive and embarrassed air, and said nothing. Catharine told them, that knowing the mother of these princesses, and their country being taken by the French†, she had sent for them to have them educated at her court. On their return from the palace, the two young princes talked much of the young strangers, and Alexander said, that he thought the eldest very pretty‡. “O, not in the least,” cried the

* Catharine often said, toward the end of her life,
“I arrived in Russia poor, but I will not die in debt
“to the empire, for I shall leave her the Crimea and
“Poland as my portion.”

† It was at the time of Custine’s expedition into
Germany.

‡ She was in reality charming: the grand-duchess
Alexandra

the younger, "neither of them; they
"must be sent to Riga to the princes
"of Courland: they are only fit for
"them*."

What Alexander had said, however, was reported to his grandmother, who was delighted to find that the lady she designed for him, and with whom she herself seemed enchanted, appeared handsome in his eyes. Catharine pretended that she resembled Louisa of Baden when she arrived in Russia. She ordered the picture taken of her at that time to be brought, that she might compare it with

Alexandra is the only beauty in the court of Russia that can be compared with her. Her sister was but a child, being only thirteen, but she had something still more striking and sprightly.

* These princes were educated there at that time, as being one day to succeed their uncle in the throne. The elder was intended for the second grand-duchess Helena Pavlovna. But the scene is much changed with them: they are now subalterns in the army, and the elder has even been banished to a garrison of invalides.

the

the princess; and, as may be supposed, every one present declared that two drops of water could not be more alike. From that moment she became singularly attached to Louisa, redoubled her tenderness towards Alexander, and engaged with more pleasure in the scheme of leaving the throne to them as her immediate successors.

The young strangers made their first appearance at court on the day when the deputies of Poland were admitted to thank Catharine for the honour she had done the republic by keeping three-fourths of it for herself*.

The

* At this period, part of the kingdom or republic was left to Poland. The deputies, however, were received only as those of a subject province; they stood uncovered, the empress sitting; and she saluted them only by a slight motion of the head, after they had prostrated themselves before her. Count Brannicki, husband of the empress's favourite, was the orator of this humiliating embassy, which would deliver its harangue, however, in the Polish language. The following sentences of his speech are remarkable:

The princesses were as much dazzled with the magnificence that surrounded them, as others were with their opening charms; but the elder met with an accident, which led the superstitious Russians to say that she would be unfortunate in their country. As she approached the throne of Catharine, she struck her foot against the corner of one of the steps, and fell flat on the ground before the throne. May the sad presage never be realised!

While the young sister spent her days sorrowfully in tears for her absence from her country and relations, which all the pomp of the court could not obliterate from her mind, and was at length sent

“The great Catharine has deigned to speak a word, and give the signal; and despotism, ready to seize on the throne of Poland, fell like an idol.” This word of Catharine was a pamphlet composed by Altesti, in which all the nobles of Poland were termed jacobins, and the king seditious: this *signal* was the sending of two armies into the country, and the *idol of despotism* was the constitution of the 3d of May!

away

away loaded with presents, which afforded her less pleasure than the expectation of soon beholding again the banks of the Rhine *, the princess Louisa appeared to

* Besides several diamonds which she received, a pension was given her, which was to be exchanged for a marriage portion. As she is become queen of Sweden, I know not whether she has received her Russian dower. Among the presents made her was a riband of the order of St. Andrew for her father: this was the first order in Russia, and Catharine did not even know the number of its knights; as it appeared that the prince of Baden was one of them already. The empress, however, would not allow the riband to be sent back, but permitted the prince to bestow it on his son, then a child. It frequently happened that officers were presented with the insignia of orders, which had been given to them before: one of these, having solicited some other recompence in vain, wore his two similar crosses at once. Catharine, it must be added, so magnificent on some occasions, displayed a ridiculous parsimony in bestowing on the governess of the princesses of Baden, who had educated them, and conducted them into Russia, a paltry pension of two hundred rubles (20*l.*), at which even the court of Carlsruhe was indignant. Similar acts of meanness frequently disgraced the liberalities of Catharine. She never gave willingly,

to smile on the destiny that awaited her. An unknown comforter had entered her heart, and dried her tears. The sight of the young prince, who was to be her husband, and who equalled herself in beauty of person and gentleness of mind, had inspired her with love. She submitted gracefully to everything required of her, learned the Russian language, was instructed in the Greek religion, and was soon in a capacity of making public profession of her new faith, and receiving on her arms and bare delicate feet the unctions administered by a bishop, who proclaimed her grand-duchess under the name of Elizabeth Alexievna. Catharine chose rather

except to those who had already too much: she liked better to gratify than to recompense. Towards the end of her life she grew niggardly, in particular towards the imperial family, who were sometimes in want of necessaries, while the favourite and his creatures wallowed in profusion.

to

to give her her own surname than leave her that of her father, as is customary*.

In the month of May following, the ceremony of betrothing was performed with all extraordinary pomp and entertainments. Russia had just finished three wars, almost equally triumphant. A multitude of generals and other officers, covered with the laurels they had gathered in battle, added to the number of the court. A great many Swedes, admirers of Catharine; almost all the Polish nobles who had submitted or were devoted to her; Tartarian khans; envoys from

* The patronymic names of the Russians have something ancient and respectable. A Russian might call the empress, even when speaking to her, *Ekaterrina Alexievna*, Catharine daughter of Alexius. The princess of Baden, therefore, should have called herself *Elizabetha Carlovna*, as she was the daughter of prince Charles. The Greeks had the same custom; and we, happily translating the Russian terminations by the Greek, might say Ivan Basilides, Alexander Nicolaïdes, &c. as we say Alcides, Seleucides, Heraclides.

Great

Great Bukharia; Turkish bashaws; Greek and Moldavian deputies; sophis of Persia; with French emigrants, demanding at once protection and vengeance*; increased at this juncture the crowd of courtiers attending the proud autocratrix of the north. No court ever exhibited such a brilliant and variegated spectacle. These were the last resplendent days that Catharine enjoyed. She dined on a throne raised in the midst of different tables. Crowned and covered with gold and diamonds, her eye carelessly wandered over the immense assembly, composed of persons of all nations, whom she seemed

* One day the young Richelieu, a Persian envoy, some deputies of the Calmucks, and an old Russian madman, whom Catharine created a knight, at the recommendation of N. Soltikof, for having prayed for her, were presented to the empress at the same time. Richelieu kissed her hand with all the ease of a Frenchman; the Persian, with the ceremonies of the east; the Calmucks, throwing themselves on the ground; and the old Russian, kneeling down, and raising his eyes to heaven.

to

to behold at her feet. Surrounded by her numerous and brilliant family, a poet would have taken her for Juno seated amidst the gods*.

The arrival of the princess of Saxe-Cobourg with her three daughters, one of whom became the wife of the grand-duke Constantine, was less striking. The Russians even indulged in witty remarks on these princesses, and on the antiquity and bad taste of their dress. They were

* This in fact took place, particularly in the following strophe of the epithalamium :

Ni la reine de Thèbe au milieu de ses filles,
Ni Louis de ses fils assemblant les familles,
Ne formèrent jamais un cercle si pompeux.
Trois générations vont fleurir devant elle,
Et c'est elle toujours qui charmera nos yeux :
Fière, d'être leur mère, & non d'être immortelle,
Telle est Junon parmi les dieux.

The Theban queen amid her daughters fair,
The sons of Lewis, an illustrious race,
Ne'er form'd a circle proudly born to grace
The wond'ring world with majesty so rare !
Three glorious springs shall deck the reverend tree,
Whose stem immortal parentage shall claim,
And still the peerless origin shall be
Like Juno, first in splendor as in fame.

not

not presented till their wardrobe had been renewed. Constantine did not like either of them: he said they had a German air; so Russian was his taste. It was necessary to inflame his imagination to induce him to make a choice; and this fell on the youngest, a little brunette, who displayed marks of wit, which excited interest in her behalf in the bosom of Constantine, of whose character we shall have occasion to speak hereafter.

CHAP. II.

CATHARINE II.

Particulars of the sickness and death of Catharine—Her portrait—Her character—Observations on her court, courtiers, and ministers—Influence of the French Revolution on her mind—Question examined, how far she was the patron of letters—Her literary works—Manners and monuments of her reign.

THE visit of the king of Sweden to Petersburg, the entertainments to which it gave rise, and the mortifying circumstances in which it terminated, hastened, no doubt, the death of Catharine. For six weeks she had given herself up to
a round

a round of amusements, and subjected herself to continual fatigue: for to her, the going up and down the stairs of the palace, the business of dressing, and appearing in public, had long been a wearisome task; and the more so, as she was still desirous of looking young and healthful, and was always averse to the use of her sedan. Aware of the first of these difficulties, several of her courtiers, upon occasion of the balls and entertainments that were given by them in honour of the king, contrived for her ease that the stairs of their houses should form a gentler ascent, which was richly carpeted. A gallantry of this kind cost Besborodko no less a sum than three thousand rubles (3000*l.*), which he expended to render his house commodious for her reception.

Towards the close of her life, Catharine had so increased in size, as to be an object almost of deformity. Her legs, which
were

were always swollen and often ulcerated, had entirely lost their shape, and she could no longer boast that handsome foot which had formerly been so much admired. The noted pirate Lambro Canziani, whom admiral Ribas, through the favour of Zubof, had introduced to the empress, and who acted in quality of buffoon, after having previously served her as corsair in the Archipelago, was desirous also of prescribing as her physician. He accordingly persuaded her that he had an infallible remedy for her legs; and he himself was even at the pains of fetching water from the sea for the purpose of a cold bath, to be used once a day for her feet. The application succeeded at first, and she joined with Lambro in ridiculing the prescriptions of her physicians: but the swellings soon returned, and from late hours and fatigue her disorder greatly increased. When the king's refusal

refusal was announced to her, and she was obliged to dismiss her court after having summoned it to celebrate the betrothing of her grand-daughter, she experienced a slight stroke of apoplexy. From the constraint which for several days after she imposed on herself, that she might appear with her accustomed serenity, and betray no symptom of the vexation she felt at the refractoriness of *the little king**, the blood and humours crowded still more to the head; her face, which was before highly inflamed, became at this period additionally red and livid, and her indisposition returned with greater frequency.

* This was an epithet which she gave him in derision. The young prince was ambitious from his infancy of the title of grown man, which he strove by his actions to merit. Walking one day in a park, two women cried, "Let us run to the path-way to see our little king." Gustavus, hearing them, replied, somewhat piqued: "Little king! pray, ladies, have you then a greater one?"

I should

I should not perhaps have mentioned here the signs and tokens of her death: but as miracles are still in fashion in Russia, it may not be amiss to observe, that on the evening of her visit with the king at the house of Samoïlof, a bright star shot from the sky over her head, and fell into the Neva; and for the honour of truth and funereal tokens, I must add, that this fact was the common talk of the whole city. Some would have it, that this beautiful star was a prognostic of the young queen's journey into Sweden; while others, remarking that it made its descent near the spot where the citadel and tombs of the sovereigns were situated, tremblingly whispered that it was the harbinger of the approaching dissolution of the empress. I say, *tremblingly whispered*; for in Russia death and the empress were words that could not be coupled together without danger of punishment.

But

But waving this, it is certain, that on the 4th of November 1796, Catharine, having what was called her *little hermitage* (small party), displayed an uncommon share of spirits. By a vessel from Lubeck, she had received the news of the French under Moreau having been obliged to repass the Rhine, and she wrote, upon this occasion, to the Austrian minister Cobenzel a very humorous note*. She amused herself greatly with Leof Narishkin, her grand ecuyer and first buffoon, trafficking with him for all sorts of bawbles, which he usually carried in his pockets to sell to her, like an itinerant pedlar, whose character he attempted to personate. She rallied him with great pleasantry upon the terrors to which he was subject upon hearing of any obituary intelligence, by

* The note, which was in everybody's hands, was this: "I hasten to inform your excellent excellence, " that the excellent troops of the excellent court have " given the French an excellent drubbing."

informing

informing him of the death of the king of Sardinia, which she had also just learned; and she spoke of this event in a free and jocular manner. She retired, however, somewhat earlier than usual, assigning as a reason, that too much laughing had given her slight symptoms of colic.

The next morning she arose at her accustomed hour, and sending for her favourite, gave him a short audience. She afterwards transacted business with her secretaries, but dismissed the last that came, bidding him wait in the antichamber, and she would presently call for him to finish what he was about. The valet, Zachary Constantinowitz, waited for a while; but, uneasy at not being called, and hearing no noise in the apartment, he at last opened the door, when he saw, to his surprise and terror, the empress prostrate on the floor between the two doors leading from the alcove to her water-closet. She was already without sense or motion.

motion. The valet ran for the favourite, whose apartment was above; physicians were sent for; and consternation and tumult prevailed about the empress. A mattress was spread near the window; she was laid upon it; bleeding, bathing, and all the means usually resorted to upon such occasions, were employed, and they produced their ordinary effect. She was still alive: her heart was found to beat; but there was no other perceptible sign of motion. The favourite, seeing her in this alarming state, sent to the counts Soltikof and Bezborodko, and others of the nobility. Every one was eager to dispatch a messenger to the grand-duke Paul; and the person employed in this service by Zubof was his own brother. Meanwhile the imperial family, and the rest of the household, were ignorant of the situation of the empress, which was kept secret. Till eleven o'clock, her accustomed hour of summoning the grand-dukes, it was

3 not

not known that she was at all indisposed; and the circumstance of her being seriously ill did not transpire till one; and was then mentioned with a timid and mysterious caution, through fear of the consequences of mistake. You might see two courtiers meet each other, both perfectly acquainted with the circumstance of the apoplexy, yet questioning one another, answering in turn, watching each other's looks, and cautiously advancing step by step, that they might arrive both together at the terrible point, and be able to talk of what both already knew. It is necessary to have frequented a court, and especially the court of Russia, to be able to judge of the importance of these things, and exculpate the historian from the charge of absurdity for relating actual circumstances.

In the meantime, those whom chance, or their connexion with office, placed in the way of being early informed of the truth,

truth, hastened to communicate it to their families and friends; for the death of the empress was looked to as the epoch of some extraordinary revolution in the state, as well from the character of Paul as from the projects and dispositions of which Catharine was suspected. It was, therefore, of importance to be able to take precautions in time; and the court first, and presently the city, were in an alarming state of agitation and anxiety.

Five or six couriers arrived nearly at the same instant at Gatchina, but the grand-duke was absent. He was gone a few miles with his court to inspect a mill, which he had ordered to be constructed. Upon receiving the intelligence, he appeared extremely affected. He soon, however, recovered from his emotion, asked a thousand questions of the messengers, and gave orders for his journey, which he performed with such expedition,

expedition, that in less than three hours he was at Petersburg, which is twelve leagues from his residence at Gatchina. He arrived at eight in the evening with his wife, and found the palace in the greatest confusion.

His presence attracted about him some courtiers and ministers, while others disappeared. The favourite, a prey to grief and terror, had relinquished the reins of empire: the great, occupied with the consequences of this event, arranged their affairs in private: all the intrigues of the court were disconcerted in a moment, and, like the spokes of a wheel when the stock is destroyed, were without point of union.

Paul, accompanied by his whole family, repaired to the chamber of his mother, who gave, however, no sign of recognition at the appearance of her assembled children. She was lying on the mattress, perfectly still, and without any appear-

ance of life. The grand-duke Alexander, his wife, and the young princesses, burst into tears, and formed round her a most affecting groupe. The grand-duchesses, the gentlemen and ladies of the court, were up all night, waiting the last sigh of the empress. The grand-duke and his sons were frequently by her side to witness this event; and the next day passed in the same anxiety and expectation.

Paul, whose grief for the loss of a mother by whom he had been so little beloved, could not be expected to be extremely overwhelming, was occupied in giving directions and preparing every thing for his accession. Catharine still breathed, although nothing was thought of but the changes that were about to take place, and the individual who was on the point of succeeding her.

By degrees the apartments of the palace were filled with officers who had
come

come with expedition from Gatchina, and were dressed in a manner so different to that which prevailed at Petersburg, that they appeared to belong to some remote age, or to have arrived from another world. In the pale and haggard countenances of the old courtiers, wherever they were seen, mortification, terror, and grief, were depicted; and they successively retired, to give place to the new comers. The palace was surrounded, and all the streets that led to it were crowded with carriages; and he who could claim the slightest acquaintance passed the day there, waiting the effect of this sudden event. Orders were given, that no person should quit the city, and no courier was suffered to pass the gates.

It was generally believed that Catharine had died the preceding evening, but that her death, for reasons of state, was still concealed. The fact however is, that

that she was all this time in a kind of lethargy. The remedies which were administered produced their natural effect, and she had even moved one of her feet, and pressed the hand of one of her women: *but, happily for Paul, the power of speech was gone for ever.* About ten in the evening she appeared suddenly to revive, and began to rattle in the throat in a most terrible manner. The imperial family hastened to her; but this new and shocking spectacle was too much for the princesses, who were obliged to withdraw. At last she gave a lamentable shriek, which was heard in the neighbouring apartments, and died, after having continued for thirty-seven hours in a state of insensibility. During this period she gave no indication of pain, till the moment before she expired, and her death appears to have been as happy as her reign.

If the love which monarchs have deserved

served from their subjects has been sometimes estimated by the impression produced by their death, Russia is not the country to which we can apply the observation, unless indeed the court be taken for the whole empire. The individual who was the greatest loser by the death of the empress, and whom it hurled at once from the pinnacle of greatness and power into the obscurity from which favour had raised him, was also the individual who was most afflicted at the event; and there was something in the expression of his grief that was truly affecting. The young grand-duchesses, who had a tender regard for their grandmother, with whom they had lived on terms of greater familiarity than with their own parents, paid her also the unfeigned tribute of their tears: they considered her as their providing hand, and as the source from which flowed all their enjoyments and felicity. Those ladies

ladies and courtiers too, who had experienced the kindness of her disposition and enjoyed the pleasure of her private society, where she displayed a most captivating amenity, in like manner lamented her death. Even the young persons of her court, both male and female, regretted the happy evenings of the Hermitage, and that freedom of ease and pleasure which Catharine so well knew how to inspire; and they contrasted with these the military constraint and etiquette that were likely to succeed. The wits and railers of Petersburg groaned in secret, that they now must respect the very persons whom they so long had been accustomed to ridicule and despise, and submit to a course of life that had been the constant and inexhaustible topic of their sarcasms and jests. The menial servants of Catharine sincerely bewailed a good and generous mistress, whose mild and equal temper,

temper, and noble and dignified character, were above those daily bickerings, those gusts of petty passion, which are the poison of domestic life. In truth, if we judge of Catharine as of the mother of a family, consider her palace as her house, her courtiers as her children, she was entitled to lamentations and tears.

There were other personages on this disastrous occasion of a pale and woeful aspect; but these were incapable of weeping. In them it was an air of guilt rather than of sadness, and their grief would bear no construction favourable to Catharine. I refer to those creatures of the favourite, those hypocritical ministers, those dastardly courtiers, that crowd of wretches of all states and conditions, whose fortunes and hopes were derived from the easy disposition of Catharine, and the abuses of her reign. In this dark list must be also included those who
had

had a share in the revolution of 1762: these men appeared to awake as from a long dream, which had suspended reflection, to be delivered up to the influence of terror, and perhaps of remorse.

As to the opinion of the people, that pretended touchstone of the merit of sovereigns, nothing could equal their indifference as to what was going on in the palace. It was said, indeed, that provisions would be cheaper, and the power of masters over their slaves be restrained and limited. The principal inhabitants of the city were in a state of silent consternation.

In so extensive a capital, and especially in so polite and brilliant a court, some extraordinary changes were quickly visible. The air of freedom, of ease, and of gallantry, which had so lately prevailed, was succeeded by a visible constraint. In the apartments in which Catharine had just fallen into the sleep

of death, the word of command, the clattering of swords and of soldiers, and the echo of enormous boots, already resounded. From the sombre dress of the ladies, the unusual garb of the men, the strange phraseology which every one was eager to adopt, and the general contrasts with what had existed before, those who had been acquainted with each other met without being known, spoke without being understood, and asked questions without receiving an answer. The day of St. Catharine, hitherto celebrated with so much pomp and rejoicings, arrived at this interval, as if to depict with greater horror the desolation of this fairy palace, heretofore the theatre of so many pleasures and entertainments.

Though seventy years of age, Catharine still retained some remains of beauty. Her hair was always dressed in the old style of simplicity, and with peculiar neatness,

ness, and no head ever became a crown better than hers. She was of the middle stature, and corpulent; few women, however, with her corpulence, would have attained the graceful and dignified carriage for which she was remarked. In private, the good-humour and confidence with which she inspired all about her, seemed to keep up an unceasing scene of youth, playfulness, and gaiety. Her charming conversation and familiar manners placed all those who were admitted to her dressing-room or assisted at her toilette, perfectly at ease; but the moment she had put on her gloves to make her appearance in the neighbouring apartments, she assumed a very different countenance and deportment. From an agreeable and facetious woman, she appeared all at once the reserved and majestic empress. Whoever had seen her then for the first time would have found her not below the idea he had previously formed,

formed, and would have said, "This
"is indeed the Semiramis of the north!"
The maxim, *Præsentia minuit famam*,
could no more be applied to her than
to Frederic the Great. I saw her once
or twice a week for ten years, and
every time with renewed admiration.
My eagerness to examine her person
caused me successively to neglect pro-
strating myself before her with the crowd;
but the homage I paid by gazing at
her, was surely more flattering. She
walked slowly, and with short steps; her
majestic forehead unclouded, her look
tranquil, and her eyes often cast on the
ground. Her mode of saluting was by
a slight inclination of the body, yet not
without grace; but the smile she assum-
ed, vanished with the occasion. If, upon
the introduction of a stranger, she pre-
sented her hand to him to kiss, she de-
meaned herself with great courtesy, and
commonly addressed a few words to him
upon

upon the subject of his travels and his visit: but all the harmony of her countenance was instantly discomposed, and you forgot for a moment the great Catharine, to reflect on the infirmities of an old woman; as, on opening her mouth, it was apparent that she had no teeth. Her voice too was hoarse and broken, and her speech inarticulate. The lower part of her face was rather large and coarse; her grey eyes, though clear and penetrating, evinced something of hypocrisy, and a certain wrinkle at the base of the nose indicated a character somewhat sinister. The celebrated Lampi had lately painted a striking likeness of her, though extremely flattering: Catharine, however, remarking that he had not entirely omitted that unfortunate wrinkle, the evil genius of her face, was greatly dissatisfied, and said that Lampi had made her too serious and too wicked. He must accordingly retouch, and spoil the picture,

picture, which appeared now like the portrait of a young nymph; though the throne, the sceptre, the crown, and some other attributes, sufficiently indicate that it is the picture of an empress. In other respects, the performance well deserves the attention of the amateur, as also does a portrait of the present empress by the same hand*.

The character of Catharine can, in my opinion, only be estimated from her ac-

* The celebrated Le Brun, who was at Petersburg, and who could not obtain the honour of taking her likeness when living, saw her after she was dead, and drew it from his memory and imagination. I saw the rough draught of this portrait, which was extremely like.—The following humorous advice was given to M. le Brun to render the resemblance perfect: Take a map of the Russian empire for the canvas; the darkness of ignorance, for the ground; the spoils of Poland, for the drapery; human blood, for the colouring; the monuments of her reign, for the outlines; and for the shading, six months of the reign of her successor.

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tions. Her reign, for herself and her court, had been brilliant and happy ; but the last years of it were particularly disastrous for the people and the empire. All the springs of government became debilitated and impaired. Every general, governor, chief of department, was become a petty despot. Rank, justice, impunity, were sold to the highest bidder. An oligarchy of about a score of knaves partitioned Russia, pillaged, by themselves or others, the finances, and shared the spoils of the unfortunate. Their lowest valets, and even their slaves, obtained in a short time offices of considerable importance and emolument. One had a salary of from three to four hundred roubles a year (30 or 40 l.), which could not possibly be increased by any honest dealing, yet was he sufficiently rich to build round the palace houses valued at fifty thousand crowns (12,500l.)

Catha-

Catharine, so far from inquiring into the impure source of such sudden wealth, rejoiced to see her capital thus embellished under her eyes, and applauded the inordinate luxury of these wretches, which she erroneously considered as a proof of the prosperity of her reign. In the worst days of France, pillage was never so general, and never so easy. Whoever received a sum of money from the crown for any undertaking, had the impudence to retain half, and afterwards complained of its insufficiency, for the purpose of obtaining more; and either an additional sum was granted, or the enterprise abandoned. The great plunderers even divided the booty of the little ones, and thus became accomplices in their thefts. A minister knew almost to a ruble what his signature would procure to his secretary; and a colonel felt no embarrassment in talking with a general of the profits of the army, and the extortions

he made upon the soldiers*. Every one, from the peculiar favourite to the lowest in employ, considered the property of the state as an harvest to be reaped, and grasped at it with as much avidity as the populace at an ox given up to be devoured. The Orlofs, as well as Potemkin and Panin, filled their places

* The colonel was the despot of his regiment, of which he had the exclusive management, in whole and in detail. The Russian army, wherever it may be situated, whether in a subjected territory, the territory of an ally, or that of an enemy, always living at free quarters, the colonels regularly take to themselves nearly the whole of the money destined for its support. By way of indemnification, they turn the horses into the fields, and the men into the houses of the peasants, there to live free of expence. The pay of a colonel is from seven to eight hundred rubles (70*l.* or 80*l.*) only a year; but the profit he derives from a regiment amounts to fifteen or twenty thousand (1500*l.* or 2000*l.*) A minister asking one day some favour of the empress for a poor officer, she replied, "If he be poor, it is his own fault; he has long had a regiment." Thus robbery was privileged, and probity laughed at and despised.

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with a degree of dignity. The first displayed some talents, and an inordinate ambition: Panin had greater genius, greater patriotism, and more virtues*. In general, during the last years of Catharine, none were so little as the great. Without knowledge, without penetration, without pride, without probity, they could not even boast that false honour which is to loyalty what hypocrisy is to virtue:

* He did one act of generosity in particular, which has found no imitators. The education of the grand- duke Paul, to whom he was first governor, being finished, the empress, among other rewards for this service, gave him seven thousand peasants, while the aides de camp, secretaries, and others employed by count Panin as his assistants, were totally unnoticed by her. Panin immediately divided among them the seven thousand peasants; and I have seen several officers who are still rich with the boon. This generous action should not, however, lead us to forget, that the two principal measures of his administration were marked with misfortune: the exchange of Holstein for six ships, which Denmark never gave; and the first division of Poland, which excited a craving for the remainder.

unfeeling as bathaws, rapacious as tax-gatherers, pilfering as lacqueys, and venal as the meanest abigails of a play, they might truly be called the rabble of the empire. Their creatures, their hirelings, their valets, and even their relations, did not accumulate wealth by the gifts of their bounty, but by the extortions committed in their name, and the traffic made of their credit: they also were robbed themselves, as they robbed the crown. The meanest services rendered to these men were paid by the state; and the wages of their buffoons, servants, musicians, private secretaries, and even tutors of their children, defrayed out of some public fund, of which they had the control. Some few among them sought for talents, and appeared to esteem merit: but neither talents nor merit acquired a fortune under their protection, or partook of their wealth; partly from the avarice of those patrons, but still more from
their

their total want of decency and judgment. The only way of gaining their favour was by becoming their buffoon, and the only mode of turning it to account was by turning knave.

Thus, during this reign, almost every man in office, or who had credit at court, was the favourite of fortune, and acquired riches and honours. At the galas given by the empress, swarms of new-created counts and princes made their appearance, and that at a time when in France all titles were about to be abolished. If we except the Soltikofs, we shall find at this period no family of distinction taken into favour. To any other country this would have been no evil; but in Russia, where the rich nobility is the only class that has any education, and often any principles of honour, it was a serious calamity to the empire. Besides, all these upstarts were so many hungry leeches, who must be fed with
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the best blood of the state, and fattened with the hard earnings of the people. A frequent change of kings is often not burthenfome to a state, to whom it still remains an inheritance; but a continual change of favourites and ministers, who must all load their hives before they depart, is enough to ruin any country but Russia. How many millions must it have cost to fill successively the rapacious maws of about a dozen peculiar favourites? How many, to render rich and noble the Besborodkos, the Zavadofskys, the Markofs, and a too numerous list of others who might be named? Have not the Orlofs, the Potemkins, the Zubofs, acquired revenues greater than those of kings; and their underlings, agents in the sale of their signatures, and managers of their petty traffic, become more wealthy than the most successful merchants * ?

With

* A work has fallen into my hands, intituled "Life of Catharine II." in which the author gives a statement

With respect to the government of Catharine, it was as mild and moderate, within the immediate circle of her influence, as it was arbitrary and terrible at a distance. Whoever, directly or indirectly, enjoyed the protection of the favourite, exercised, wherever he was situated, the most undisguised tyranny. He insulted his superiors, trampled on his inferiors, and violated justice, order, and the *ukases**, with impunity.

It is to the policy first, and next to the weakness of Catharine, to which in part must be attributed the relaxed and disorganized state of her internal government: though the principal cause will be found in the enormous sums obtained by the favourites. But how very defective is this estimate, and how much below the truth! How is it possible, indeed, to calculate the immense sums which have enriched the Orlofs, the Potemkins, and the Zubofs, favourites who had the same access to the treasury of the state, as to their own private coffers?

* Edicts of the emperor.

be found in the depraved manners and character of the nation. How was a woman to effect that which the active discipline of the cane, and the sanguinary axe of Peter I. were inadequate to accomplish. The usurper of a throne, which she was desirous to retain, she was under the necessity of treating her accomplices with kindness. A stranger in the empire over which she reigned, she sought to remove everything discordant, everything heterogeneous, and to become one with the nation, by adopting and even flattering its tastes and its prejudices. She often knew how to reward, but never how to punish; and it was solely by suffering her power to be abused, that she succeeded in preserving it.

She had two passions, which never left her but with her last breath: the love of man, which degenerated into licentiousness; and the love of glory, which
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sunk into vanity. By the first of these passions, she was never so far governed as to become a Messalina, but she often disgraced both her rank and her sex: by the second, she was led to undertake many laudable projects, which were seldom completed, and to engage in unjust wars, from which she derived at least that kind of fame which never fails to accompany success.

The generosity of Catharine, the splendor of her reign, the magnificence of her court, her institutions, her monuments, her wars, were precisely to Russia what the age of Louis XIV. was to Europe; but, considered individually, Catharine was greater than this prince. The French formed the glory of Louis, Catharine formed that of the Russians. She had not, like him, the advantage of reigning over a polished people; nor was she surrounded from infancy by great and accomplished characters. She had subtle
ambas-

ambassadors, not unskilled in the diplomatic art, and some fortunate generals; but Romanzof, Panin, and Potemkin excepted, she could not boast a single man of genius: for the wit, cunning, and dexterity of certain of her ministers, the ferocious valour of a Suvarof, the ductile capacity of a Repnin, the favour of a Zubof, the readiness of a Besborodko, and the assiduity of a Nicholas Soltikof, are not worthy of being mentioned as exceptions. It was not that Russia did not produce men of merit; but Catharine feared such men, and they kept at a distance from her. We may conclude, therefore, that all her measures were her own, and particularly all the good she did.

Let not the misfortunes and abuses of her reign give to the private character of this princess too dark and repulsive a shade! She appeared to be thoroughly humane and generous, as all who
ap-

approached her experienced: all who were admitted to her intimacy were delighted with the good-natured fallies of her wit: all who lived with her were happy. Her manners were gay and licentious, but she still preserved an exterior decorum, and even her favourites always treated her with respect. Her love never excited disgust, nor her familiarity contempt. She might be deceived, won, seduced, but she would never suffer herself to be governed. Her active and regular life, her moderation, firmness, fortitude, and even sobriety, are moral qualities which it would be highly unjust to ascribe to hypocrisy. How great might she not have been, had her heart been as well governed as her mind! She reigned over the Russians less despotic than over herself; she was never hurried away by anger, never a prey to dejection, and never indulged in transports of immoderate joy. Caprice, ill-humour, and peevish-

peevishness, formed no part of her character, and were never perceived in her conduct. I will not decide, whether she were truly great, but she was certainly beloved*.

* Many quatrains have been composed, either to serve as an epitaph, or be placed under the portrait of Catharine, but none have been struck off so happily, or describe her so truly, as the following. They are from the pens of two young Russians, the pleasant qualities of whose mind are enhanced by those of an admirable character, and a generous heart.

Elle fit oublier, par un esprit sublime,
D'un pouvoir odieux, les énormes abus,
Elle se maintint par ses vertus
Sur un trône acquis par le crime.

" Bless'd in her sway, her subjects might disown
" Th' unnumber'd evils of despotic rule;
" And tho' a crime had fixed her on the throne,
" She reign'd by precepts drawn from Virtue's school."

The next is more flattering, but not inferior in merit:

Dans le sein de la paix, au milieu de la guerre,
A tous ses ennemis elle dicta la loi:
Par ses talens divers elle étonna la terre,
Ecrivit comme un sage, & regna comme un roi.

" Amid the train of Peace, or din of War,
" Each foe appall'd her sov'reign will obey'd;
" Her mighty genius held the world in awe;
" Like sages wrote, like Jove the sceptre sway'd."

Imbued,

Imbued, from her youth, with the corrupt maxims by which courts are infected; enveloped, on her throne, in a cloud of incense, through which it was hardly possible for her to see clearly, it would be too severe to apply at once the searching light of reason to her character, and try its defects by so strict an inquest. Let us judge her now as we would some twenty years ago, and consider Russia still, as to the people, as in the age of Charlemagne. The friends of liberty ought to render to Catharine the same justice as is rendered by all rational theologians to those great and wise men who did not enjoy the light of revelation. Her crimes were the crimes of her station, not of her heart: the terrible scenes of Ismail and of Prague appeared to her court to be humanity itself. She needed perhaps only to be unfortunate, to have possessed the purest virtues; but the unvaried prosperity of her
arms

arms dazzled and corrupted her. Vanity, that unfortunate rock so fatal to every female, was her great failing; and her reign will ever bear the distinguishing characteristic of her sex.

Meanwhile, in whatever light she is considered, she will ever be placed in the first rank among those who, by their genius, their talents, and especially their success, have attracted the admiration of mankind. Her sex, giving a bolder relief to the great qualities she displayed on the throne, will place her above all the examples of real history; and the fabulous ages of an Isis and a Semiramis must be resorted to, to find a woman who has executed, or rather undertaken, such daring projects.

The ten last years of her reign carried her power, her glory, and perhaps her political crimes, to their height. When the great Frederic, dictator of the kings of Europe, died, she was left the
senior

senior sovereign, the eldest of the crowned heads of the continent of Europe; and if we except Joseph and Gustavus, all those heads taken together were unequal to her own: for she surpassed them as much in understanding, as she exceeded them in the extent of her territories. If Frederic was the dictator of these kings, Catharine became their tyrant. It was then that the end of that political thread, by which poor Europe had been moved like a puppet, and which had escaped from France to Berlin, and from Berlin to Vienna, became fixed in the hands of a woman who drew it as she pleased. The immense empire, an empire almost of romance, which she had subjected to her sway; the inexhaustible resources she derived from a country and a people as yet in a state of infancy; the extreme luxury of her court, the barbarous pomp of her nobility, the wealth and princely grandeur of her favourites, the glorious exploits

exploits of her armies, and the gigantic views of her ambition, threw Europe into a sort of fascinating admiration; and those monarchs, who had been too proud to pay each other even the slightest deference, found no humiliation in making a lady the arbiter of their interests, the ruling power of all their measures.

But the French revolution, so unfriendly to sovereigns in general, was particularly so to Catharine. The blaze, which suddenly emerged from the bosom of France as from the crater of a burning volcano, poured a stream of light upon Russia vivid as that of lightning; and injustice, crimes, and blood were seen, where before all was grandeur, glory, and virtue. Catharine trembled with fear and indignation. The French, those sweet heralds of her fame, those flattering and brilliant historians, who were one day to transmit to posterity the wonders of her reign, were suddenly transformed

into so many inexorable judges, at whose aspect she shuddered. The phantoms of her imagination were dispelled. That empire of Greece she was so desirous of reviving, those laws she would have established, that philosophy she intended to inculcate, and those arts which she had patronised, became odious in her sight. As a crowned philosopher, she valued the sciences so far only as they appeared the instruments for disseminating her glory. She wished to hold them as a dark lantern in her hand; to make use of their light as should suit her convenience; to see without being seen: but when they dazzled her all at once with their bright emanations, she wished to extinguish them. She, who had been the friend and disciple of the French speculative writers*, now wished to be re-enveloped in

* Upon the breaking out of the revolution, Catharine ordered the bust of Voltaire to be taken from the gallery, and thrown among the lumber. She had

in the ages of barbarism: but her wishes were vain; the light was not to be resisted: if she composed herself to sleep on laurels, she awoke on the carcases of the dead: glory, which in illusion she embraced, was changed in her arms into one of the furies: and the legislatrix of the north, forgetting her own maxims and philosophy, was no longer any thing more than an old sybil. Her dastardly favourites, everywhere pointing out to her in this event, Brutuses, jacobins, and incendiaries, succeeded in filling up the measure of her suspicions and terrors. Her delirium was even carried so far, that on a king, who extended his

requested a bust of Fox at the period when, at the head of the British opposition, he prevented by his exertions the government of his country from declaring war against Russia. When this same Fox, however, opposed with equal strenuousness a war with France, this bust also, which a year before she had so highly honoured, was served in the same manner as Voltaire's.

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prerogatives, and a nobility that meliorated its government, she bestowed the appellations of rebels and traitors: the Poles were treated as jacobins, because they had not the misfortune to be Russians*.

Had Catharine been asked, when her mind was calm, if she had not herself considerably advanced and helped to strengthen this revolution, what would she have answered? Yet such is the fact: since, if she had not been so eager to seize upon the unfortunate country of the Poles, and afterwards to raise dissensions in Prussia and Sweden, she would

* The Americans, even at this epoch, became hateful to Catharine. She condemned a revolution which she had formerly pretended to admire, called Washington a rebel, and said publicly, that a man of honour could not wear the order of Cincinnatus. Accordingly Langeron, and some other emigrants, who had been invested with this order, immediately renounced it, and were seen in it no longer.

not have disgusted, as she did, all Europe and the combination of princes; Prussia would not have been induced so speedily to make peace, that he might be at leisure to watch her proceedings; nor would she have excited the indignation of Spain, by employing against a catholic king and a catholic nobility the same arms and the same insults as were employed against the French. In this view, France may erect a statue to her memory; for she has rendered the system of the enemies of that country odious and absurd to all monarchs; and has done the republic the same service as demagogues have by their enormities, and ministers by their intrigues.

Catharine never effectually patronised letters in the states of her empire. It was the reign of Elizabeth that had encouraged them; and it was distinguished by many productions worthy of proving to

Europe

Europe that the Russians may lay fair claim to every species of excellence*. Catharine, indeed, purchased a few libraries and collections of pictures, pensioned a few flatterers, flattered a few celebrated men, who might be instrumental in spreading her fame, and readily sent a medal or a snuff-box to a German writer who dedicated some hyperbolical work to her: but it was necessary to have come from some distance to please her, and to have acquired a great name to be entitled to her suffrage, and particularly to obtain any recompense. Genius might be born at her feet without being no-

* The author of these Memoirs may perhaps one day possess the requisite materials, and the leisure and tranquillity, for exhibiting to his countrymen a view of Russian literature. They will be astonished to find how nearly, in delicacy of wit, as well as in sentiment, sprightliness, and taste, it resembles their own. The Russian theatre is particularly formed upon that of the French. Government, manners, and language, are the only things in which the two nations strikingly differ from each other.

ticed,

ticed *, and still more without being encouraged; yet, jealous of every kind of fame, and especially of that which Frederic the *unique* had obtained by his writings, she was desirous of becoming an author, that she might share in it. She accordingly wrote her celebrated *Instructions for a Code of Laws*; several moral tales and allegories for the education of her grand-children; and a number of dramatic pieces and proverbs, which were acted and admired at the Hermitage. Her great undertaking, of which she was so vain, of collecting a number of words from three hundred different languages, and forming them into a dictionary, was never executed.

* Many architects, painters, sculptors, mechanics, and other artists of great talents, lived and died in obscurity and wretchedness, merely because they were Russians. Their names can only be found in certain topographical descriptions, or the accounts of foreign travellers, by whom more justice has been done them than by their own country.

Of

Of all her writings, her letters to Voltaire are certainly the best. They are even more interesting than those of the old philosophical courtier himself, who sold her watches and knitted stockings for her*; and who repeats in his letters the same ideas and compliments in a hundred different forms, and excites her continually to drive the Turks out of Europe, instead of advising her to render her own subjects free and happy. If the code of laws drawn up by Catharine bespeak a mind capable of enlarged views and a sound policy, her letters announce the wit, graces, and talents of a woman of still greater merit, and lead us to regret the means by which she obtained the acquisition of her power.

When she published her Instructions †, all

* This he says himself in one of his letters to her.

† It is known, that her Instruction for a Code came under the *index expurgatorius*, and was prohibited

all Europe resounded with her applause, and bestowed upon her already the title of legislatrix of the north. Catharine ordered deputies to be assembled from the different nations of her vast empire; but it was only that they might hear this celebrated performance read, and that she might receive their compliments; for as soon as this was done, they were all sent back to their distant homes, some in disgrace for their firmness, others decorated with medals for their servility. The manuscript was deposited in a magnificent case, to be exhibited to the curiosity of strangers. A

bited in France. Catharine and Voltaire joined in railing at this proceeding. Who would have thought that, twenty years after, all French publications whatever would be proscribed in Russia, and that a lieutenant of police of the very same Catharine would confiscate at Petersburg, in the shop of Gay, the bookseller, *L'Avis au Peuple par Tiffot*, "Tiffot's Advice to the People;" alleging that the people wanted no advice, and that it was a dangerous book.

fort

fort of committee was nominated to reduce these laws into form; and if a favourite or minister had any dependent for whom he wished to provide, or any buffoon whom he wanted to maintain free of expense, he was appointed a member of this committee, whence he derived a salary*. Yet all Europe vociferated that Russia had laws, because Catharine had written a preface to a code, and had subjected a hundred different people to the same system of slavery†.

* The author of these Memoirs knew, among other personages, one Mitrophanus Popof, a buffoon, bigot, and interpreter of dreams to a lady of the court, who was a member of this committee: he had never heard of the Instruction for a Code, and was unable to read it.

† The Instruction for a Code is so literally taken from Montesquieu and Beccaria, that Mr. F**** de B****, who undertook to translate it, thought he could not do better than copy the text of these celebrated writers. The curious may be satisfied of this fact by examining the translation, which was printed for Grasset, at Lausanne. I had my information from this respectable man himself.

Among

Among the dramatical pieces that were composed by her*, and which she caused to be acted in the theatres of Petersburg, one was of a new kind: it was neither tragedy, nor comedy, nor opera, nor play, but an assemblage of all sorts of scenes, and intitled OLEG, *an historical representation*. Upon the celebration of the last peace with the Turks, it was got up by her direction with extraordinary pomp and the most magnificent decorations, and upwards of seven hundred performers appeared upon the stage. The subject is wholly taken from Russian history, and comprises an entire epoch. In the first act, Oleg lays the foundation of Mosco. In the se-

* They are written in Rus. M. Derjavin, secretary to the empress, and known by some other works, was considered as the maker, or at least the mender, of them. It is certain, however, that she never had about her a man capable of writing her letters to Voltaire in French. Odart and Aubri, her secretaries at the time, did not write so well as herself. She was unquestionably the author.

cond,

cond, he is at Kief, where he marries his pupil *Igor*, and settles him on the throne. The ancient ceremonies observed upon the marriage of the tzars gave an opportunity of introducing some amusing scenes, and the national dances and sports, which are exhibited, furnish many charming pictures. *Oleg* then sets out upon an expedition against the Turks: we see him file off with his army, and embark. In the third act, he is at Constantinople. The emperor *Leof*, obliged to sign a truce, receives this barbarian hero with the greatest magnificence. He is seen feasting at his table, while some troops of young Greeks, boys and girls, sing a chorus to his praise, and exhibit before him the ancient dances of Greece. The next scenic decoration represents the hippodrom, where *Oleg* is entertained with the spectacle of the Olympic Games. Another theatre is then erected at the bottom of the stage, and

and some scenes from Euripides are played before the court. At length *Oleg* takes leave of the emperor, fastening his shield to a pillar in testimony of his visit, and to invite his successors to return one day to Constantinople, in imitation of his example.

The piece is truly Russian, and particularly emblematical of the character of Catharine: her favourite projects are represented in it, and the design of subjugating Turkey is alluded to, even when celebrating a peace with that country. Properly speaking, the performance is nothing more than a magic lantern, exhibiting different objects in succession to the eyes of the beholder: but to me such exhibitions, in which the great events of history are introduced as in a picture on the stage, are more interesting than the strainings of the throat of our opera singers, and the amorous intrigues of some of our tragedies.

Catha-

Catharine was neither fond of poetry nor of music, and she often confessed it. She could not endure the noise of the orchestra between the acts of a play, and she commonly silenced it. This defect of taste and feeling in a woman, who appeared in other respects so happily constituted, is astonishing, yet may serve to explain how, with so extraordinary a capacity and genius, she could become so obdurate and sanguinary. At her palace of Tauris, she constantly dined with the two pictures of the sack of Otchakof and Ismaïl before her eyes, in which Cazanov has represented, with a most hideous accuracy, the blood flowing in streams, the limbs torn from the bodies and still palpitating, the demoniac fury of the murderers, and the convulsive agonies of the murdered. It was upon these scenes of horror that her attention and imagination were fixed, while Gasparini and Mandini displayed their vocal

vocal powers, or Sarti conducted a concert in her presence.

This same empress, who wrote plays herself; who admired Ségur for his wit, and heard him sometimes repeat his verses; who had the most ridiculous farces played before her by her old courtiers, and particularly by count Stackelberg*,

* In the little societies of Catharine, all sorts of frolics and gambols were played. The old gouty courtiers were seen making their whimsical efforts to frisk and caper; and the grand-duke Constantine one day actually broke the arm of the feeble count Stackelberg, by rudely jostling against him, and throwing him down. Heretofore Ségur had acted a part in those societies unworthy of his rank and understanding. Among the verses he wrote in compliment to the empress, the following, which are the epitaph of a dog, have often been cited, and merit to be preserved. They are in the true spirit of French gallantry:

Pour prix de sa fidélité,
Le ciel, témoin de sa tendresse,
Lui devoit l'immortalité,
Pour qu'elle fût toujours auprès de sa maîtresse.

" Her fond fidelity Heav'n saw, and priz'd,
" And to reward her tenderness bestow'd
" The precious gift to live immortaliz'd,
" Enjoying still her mistress's abode."

and

and the Austrian minister*, recalled and disgraced one of her own ministers, be-

* No ambassador, perhaps, was ever so long at a court, and upon such good terms, as Cobenzel at the court of Russia. He had been sent originally by Maria Theresa, and was afterwards confirmed in his office by all her successors. He was of a mean and unwieldy figure, but had a considerable share of wit, and of that peculiar sort in particular that is pleasing to women. He was for ten years the assiduous admirer of the charming princess Dolgoruka, and Catharine delighted in his society. He had a rage for theatricals, and accordingly plays were often got up at his house, in which he acted a part, and acquitted himself well. At the age nearly of sixty, he was absurd enough to take regular lessons in singing; and often, when a courier arrived with some important intelligence from Vienna, some defeat perhaps, he was found before his mirror, practising his part, disguised as the countess of Escarbagnas, of Croupillac, &c. The unfavourable dispatches which he was continually receiving during the war, did not interrupt the entertainments, balls, and plays that were regularly given at his house. When news arrived of a French victory, it was jestingly said, "Well, well, we shall have a ball on Saturday at the ambassador's." Catharine, enraged at this dramatic mania, one day said, "You will find that he reserves his best piece for the news of the entrance of the French into Vienna."

cause

cause he wrote his dispatches facetiously, made pleasant French verses, had composed a tragedy, and was desirous of illustrating the genius of his country by publishing historical eulogies of the great men of Russia. This was prince Beloselsky, envoy at the court of Turin, a man of taste and merit, who had expended a fortune in patronising the arts, and much of his time in cultivating them himself*.

If we except the travels of the celebrated Pallas, the historical researches of the industrious Müller, and some other works upon natural history, no literary production worthy of being noticed has distinguished Russia during the reign of

* He is known by several poetical productions, and particularly by an Epistle to the French, in which he appears to be a Frenchman himself; and Voltaire wrote him a very flattering letter, and paid him the same compliment which he had paid before to the celebrated author of the Epistle to Ninon.

Catharine.

Catharine*. Natural history and mathematics are the only sciences which the Russians have contributed in some measure to advance; and even those, however trifling, have been by the help of Germans†; yet no country is so fortunately situated

* It is the same Müller who wrote so judicious a critique of the pretended history of Peter I. and of whom Voltaire said, "He is a German: I wish him more wit, and fewer consonants." Voltaire was astonished that the Russians should pretend to know their own names, and the names of their towns, better than the dictionary of Martiniene, and should complain at seeing them crippled. He persisted in writing Roumanou, Schouvalou, &c. instead of Romanof and Schuvalof. He would never write the Russian names as they were pronounced; yet, to shew us that he was acquainted with a single Chinese one, he had often the affectation to write Confutzée, where we should say Confucius.

† Many celebrated men of letters in Germany, as Klinger for instance, who has a bold and caustic mind, and Kotzebue, a dramatic author, whose plagiarisms often disgrace his talents, wrote in Russia; but they took care, particularly the former, how they published their works in that country. Kotzebue, however, deserved to be pardoned for his good perform-

situated for rendering the sciences the most essential services. Natural and ancient history might expect from her the most astonishing discoveries. The ruins of twenty cities attest that Tartary and Mongolia were once inhabited by polished nations, and the monuments which are still discovering would have realised the sublime conceptions of Buffon and Bailli. Whole libraries have been discovered under the ruins of Ablai-Kitt, and amid the ruinous heaps that skirt the Irtish. Thousands of manuscripts in unknown languages, and many others in the language of the Chinese, the Kalmucs, and the Mantfchoux, are perishing in the mouldy deserted cabinets

ances, for the sake of his Langhans, a bad imitation of Candide, and his translation of the works of Derjavin, and his Flight to Paris. The topographical and statistical works of the elegant Storch would also have merited an exception, had he dared to publish them as they were written.

of the academy: had they remained under the ruins till a government or people less barbarous had brought them to light, they would have been better preserved.

The best history of Russia is certainly that of Lévêque. Catharine detested this work as much as she did that of the abbé Chappe; and she bestowed the most extraordinary pains, scrutinising the ancient chronicles, that she might discover in this estimable historian some blunders and mistakes: because he had the courage (it is now twenty years ago) to point out the murderer of Peter III. and of Ivan. In other respects, Lévêque has merited the thanks of the Russian nation; for he is the only writer who, by his talents, labour, and perseverance, has succeeded in rendering a history, so disgusting and detached as is that of Russia till the reign of Peter I. in some degree interesting to
 I 2 foreign-

foreigners*. But who will one day worthily write the history of Catharine†? In our days, history has hitherto been a collection only of chosen events, artfully wrought up so as to give relief to a few individuals, and form a picture that shall be striking to the eye. Facts

* Those who would attempt to surpass him, instead of badly criticising his work, as *Le Clerc* has done, should reside ten years in Russia, learning the language, studying the manners, consulting the ancient annals of the country, the histories of Talischef, of prince Scherbatof, and especially the immense materials left by Müller, Bachmeister, &c.

† This will be some Russian, and I know one or two competent to the task: but he must quit his country to write it. Meanwhile a foreigner, ignorant of persons, manners, and places, may collect together some historical traits, give them a form half real, half fabulous, and call his work a History of Catharine II. But this will be no history. Were the emperor of China the subject, such accounts might satisfy me. However, the anonymous author to whom I allude, has obtained, respecting certain epochs, some good materials; but if those from whom he received them had read the work before it was printed, fewer errors, as to persons, places, and dates, would be found in it.

that

that admit of no dispute are pearls and garnets, which the historian selects at his pleasure, and threads on a black string or a white, as shall best suit the complexion of his work: truth never appears but when it is convenient. Even the author of the History of Charles XII. of Peter I. and of the Age of Louis XIV. was of opinion, that it was of greater importance to say things useful than things that are true, as if what was false could ever be useful! And in a letter to count Schuvalof, he says, “Waiting till I have *leisure to* “*methodise the terrible event of the death* “*of the tzarevitch*, I have begun another “work.” Is this the language of an historian and philosopher? Alas! if you have not the courage to assert the truth, why do you not abandon the pen of history? It is in a tragedy only, or an epic poem, that the licence can be pardoned, of *arranging a terrible event*. The
end

end of history is not to celebrate an individual, but to instruct the people, and give a lesson to governments.

Previous to the death of Catharine, the monuments of her reign resembled already so many wrecks and dilapidations : codes, colonies, education, establishments, manufactories, edifices, hospitals*, canals, towns, fortresses, everything had been begun, and everything given up before it was finished. As soon as a project entered her head, all preceding ones gave place, and her thoughts were fixed on that alone, till a new idea arose to draw off her attention. She abandoned her code, to drive the Turks out of Europe.

* One hospital, however, founded by Catharine, deserves to be mentioned as a characteristic establishment. It is destined for the reception of fifty ladies infected with a certain disease. No question is asked, either as to the name or quality of those who present themselves, and they are treated with equal care, respect, and discretion. This last word is even marked on the linen appointed for their use.

After

After the glorious peace of Kainardgi, she appeared for awhile to attend to the interior administration of her affairs, but all was presently forgotten, that she might be queen of Tauris. Her next project was the re-establishment of the throne of Constantine: to which succeeded that of humbling and punishing the king of Sweden. Afterwards the invasion of Poland became her ruling passion; and so imperiously did it fascinate her, that a second Pugatshef might have arrived at the gates of Petersburg without inducing her to relinquish her hold. She died, again meditating the destruction of Sweden, the ruin of Prussia, and mortified at the success of French republicanism. Thus was she incessantly led away by some new passion still stronger in its influence than the preceding one, and thus neglected her government both in its whole and its parts.

Medals

Medals have been struck in honor of numerous buildings which have never yet been constructed; and, among others, the marble church, which, undertaken some twenty years ago, is still on the stocks. The shells of other edifices, which have never been finished, appear like so many ruins; and Petersburg is encumbered with the rubbish of a variety of large mansions fallen to decay before they have been inhabited. The projectors and architects have pocketed the money; and Catharine, having the plan or medal in her cabinet, concluded the undertaking to be finished, and thought of it no more.

The Petersburg almanac gives a list of upwards of two hundred and forty towns founded by Catharine,—a number inferior, perhaps, to what have been destroyed by her armies; but these towns are merely so many paltry hamlets, that have changed their name and quality by an

immennoi

immennoi ukase, or supreme order of her imperial majesty: some of them even are nothing more than posts driven into the ground, containing their name, and delineating their site; yet, without waiting till they shall be finished, and particularly till they shall be peopled, they figure in the map as if they were the capitals of so many provinces*.

Prince Potemkin has actually built some towns, and constructed some ports

* Catharine built, at an enormous expence, near Tzariko-selo, the town of Sophaia, the boundaries of which are immense; but the houses are already tumbling down, and have never been inhabited. If such be the lot of a town placed immediately before her eyes, what must be the fate of those cities founded by her in the remote deserts? But the most absurd town that exists is unquestionably that of Gatchina, of which Paul has the honor to be founder. These personages look upon men as storks, who are caught by placing a wheel on the top of a house, or on a belfrey. But all these forced erections, from the superb Potsdam to the contemptible Gatchina, tend to prove that the real founders of cities are cultivation, commerce, and freedom.

in

in the Crimea. They are fine cages, but they have no birds; and such as might be allured thither would shortly die of chagrin, if they had not the power of flying away. The Russian government is subjugating and oppressive; the Russian character warlike and desolating. Tauris, since it was conquered, has become a desert*.

This

* A friend of mine, a man of learning, was travelling in Tauris under the protection of government, for the purpose of investigating the country. One day he arrived at the habitation of a Tatar, who led a patriarchal life, and treated him with becoming hospitality. My friend, perceiving that his host was dejected, asked him the cause of his sadness: "Alas! "I have great reason," said he. "May I not be "permitted to know it?"—"The Russian soldiers, "who are in the neighbourhood, come every day and "cut down my fruit-trees, that serve me both for shade "and nourishment, to burn them; and shortly my "bald head will be exposed to the burning heat of "the sun."—"Why do you not complain of this "treatment to their chief?"—"I have done so."—"Well!"—"He told me that I should be paid two "rubles a foot for such as they had already cut down, "and

This mania of Catharine, to sketch everything and complete nothing, drew from Joseph II. a very shrewd and satirical remark. During his travels in Tauris, he was invited by her to place the second stone of a town, of which she had herself, with great parade, laid the first. On his return, he said, "I have finished in a single day a very
" important business with the empress of
" Russia: she has laid the first stone of a
" city, and I have laid the last."

Of all the monuments erected by her at Petersburg that will remain as long as they shall not be swallowed up by the swamps, are the superb quay of the Neva, and the equestrian statue of

*" and the same for as many as they may cut down here-
" after. But I do not want their money. Ah! let
" me at least die in peace under the shadow of the
" trees which my fathers have planted! or if this
" will not be, then must I follow my unhappy bre-
" thren, and flee my country, as they have been com-
" pelled to do before me:"* and the tears trickled down the beard of this venerable patriarch.

Peter

Peter I.* The last, however beautiful, is greatly inferior to the accounts which hyperbolical travellers have given of it. The following verses from Delille may be applied to it :

Du haut d'un vrai rocher, sa demeure sauvage,
La nature se rit de ces rocs contrefaits.

" On a wild rock nature contemptuous fits,
" And laughs to scorn these idle counterfeits."

The idea of placing the great tzar upon a stupendous and rugged rock, over which he had climbed, was certainly new and sublime ; but it has been badly executed. The rock was brought from Finland to the bank of the Neva with infinite labour ; was twenty-one feet in

* D'Orbeil addressed some verses to Catharine, in which was the following handsome quatrain:

C'est par tes soins que le bronze respire
Sur ce rocher de Thétis aperçu,
Et que le tzar découvre son empire
Plus vaste encore qu'il ne l'avoit conçu.

" 'Twas thou that bid yon rock-built statue's pride

" In breathing bronze o'erlook the distant main ;

" Surveying hence his realms extended wide,

" The tzar still wonders at his vast domain."

height,

height, forty in length, and covered with moss several inches thick, which must have long been accumulating. It was deprived of its wild and primitive form to give it a more regular appearance; and, what with hewing and polishing, was at last reduced in size nearly one half; so that it is now a little rock under a great horse, and the tzar, who ought to be surveying from it his empire, more vast even than he had conceived, is hardly able to look into the first floor of the neighbouring houses. By another absurdity, Peter appears in the long Russian coat, which he particularly disliked, and obliged his subjects to quit and to shorten. If this statue had a pedestal proportionate to its size, it would be an admirable performance.

A picture of Petersburg and its manners under the reign of Catharine, written in the spirit of the *Picture of Paris* by the penetrating Mercier, would

would be a most interesting performance. But this, like all works of genius, has produced none but bad imitations, from the complete and perfect description of Berlin by Nicolai, to that which a professor Georgi has given of Petersburg: they are all, too, as poor in ideas, and as destitute of utility, as they are replete with minutenesses and details. Count Anhalt has given in the same way a description of the imperial house of the Cadets, of which he was director-general; in which he tells us how many stair-cases, stairs, windows, doors, and chimnies there are in this immense building. This may do well for a person desirous to contract for the cleaning of this edifice; but what instruction does it convey to the public *?

M. Storch,

* This description of Petersburg is even erroneous in its details. The author of these memoirs has the honor of being mentioned in it among the literary characters then resident in the city; but, by a strange confusion of names,

M. Storch, an industrious and well-informed young man, a Livonian, has published a work under the title of a *Picture of Petersburg*, which ought not to be confounded with the insignificant ones of which I have been speaking; but it resembles Petersburg as the portrait of Lampi resembled Catharine: it is too much in the Chinese mode, and without shadings, as he himself presented it. Storch, however, only wanted one thing to render it perfect,—an opportunity of writing it in any other country than Russia. He dedicated it to Catharine, who rewarded the author for his flattering delineations; but she afterwards expressed her dissatisfaction at his having adopted the French characters, when

names, titles, and works, general Melissino, major M**, and his brother, are made one and the same personage; yet the writer was actually at Petersburg, and knew these men. After this, what faith can be placed in descriptions?

writing

writing in German his *Statistical Pictures*, another work which gives some very accurate information as to the political state of Russia.

Petersburg, some parts of which are singularly magnificent and beautiful, does not badly resemble the sketch of a grand picture, in which are already delineated a face similar to that of the Apollo Belvidere, and an eye such as would be given to Genius, while the rest is a chaos of unfinished strokes or of dotted lines.

As Petersburg is inhabited by colonies of different nations, nothing can be more heterogeneous than its manners and customs; and, in general, it is difficult to ascertain what is the prevailing taste or fashion. The French tongue serves as the connecting tie between these various people, but many other languages are equally spoken. If a company be numerous, you will find in turn three languages

guages used, the Russian, the French, and the German; and it is not uncommon, in the same society, to hear Greeks, Italians, English, Hollanders, and Asiatics, all conversing in their own dialect.

In Petersburg, the Germans are artists and mechanics, particularly taylors and shoemakers; the English, saddlers and merchants; the Italians, architects, singers, and venders of images; but it is difficult to say what the French are. The greater part change their occupation every year: one arrives a lacquey, is made *outschitel* (a tutor), and becomes a counsellor; others have been seen actors, managers, shopkeepers, musicians, and officers, in turn. There is no place so convenient as Petersburg for observing how inconstant, enterprising, ingenious, and adapted for everything, is the French character.

To ascertain the manners and customs of each nation distinctly, you must see them in their houses—in the street they

all appear like Russians. The French play off their witticisms, sup gaily, and sing some old ballads of their country, which they have not forgotten: the English dine at five o'clock, drink punch, and talk of commerce: the Italians practise music, dance, make grimaces and gestures, and the subjects of their conversation are the theatres and the arts: in the houses of the Germans, you talk of science, smoke, dispute, eat heartily, and more than you like, from the abundance of their compliments: in those of the Russians you have everything indiscriminately, and especially gaming, which is the soul of their parties and pleasures; but it does not exclude any of the other amusements. A foreigner, and particularly a Frenchman, after winding along the inhospitable shores of Prussia, and traversing the wild and uncultivated plains of Livonia, is struck with astonishment and rapture at finding again, in the midst of a vast

a vast desert, a large and magnificent city, in which the sociality, amusements, arts, and luxury, abound, which he had supposed nowhere to exist but in Paris.

In a climate like that of Petersburg, where are scarcely a few weeks of fine weather during the whole year, and under a government like that of Russia, where politics, morals, and literature are excluded, the pleasures of society must be very contracted, and the enjoyments of domestic life proportionably increased. The luxury, however, and studied conveniences, the splendor and good taste of the apartments, the profusion and delicacies of the table, the cheerfulness and frivolity of the conversation, repay the man of pleasure for the constraint in which nature and the government hold both his body and his mind. Of balls and entertainments there is an infinite succession; and every day he is probably invited to some feast, where

he finds in a spacious house chefs d'œuvres of all the arts, and the productions of every country, brought together; and frequently even, in the midst of winter, the gardens, the fruits, and flowers of spring.

Tzarsko-selo is an immense and dreary palace, begun by Anne, finished by Elizabeth, inhabited by Catharine, and forsaken by Paul. Its situation is a swamp, the country round it a desert, and the gardens are dull and wearisome. The monuments with which it has been adorned by Catharine, like the buildings at Petersburg, are so many emblems of her character. By the side of obelisks, rostral columns and triumphal arches erected to the Orlofs, Romanzofs, and Russian warriors, who subjected the Archipelago, and for a moment reconquered Macedon, are seen tombs consecrated to some of her favourite dogs; and not far from these is the mausoleum erected
to

to the amiable Lanskoi, the most beloved of her favourites, and the only one whom death tore from her embraces. These are records certainly of very different services, most familiarly placed together. Are we from this to imagine that a dog, a lover, and an hero, were of equal importance in the eyes of the imperial Catharine? These monuments, however, will shortly disappear in the dreary swamps which serve for their foundation.

The Egyptians, who obliged the people they conquered to labour, and the Romans, who stripped every nation to embellish Rome, executed some immense works. The free Greeks distinguished themselves by the taste and elegance, rather than the magnitude of their buildings; and Russia was lately the only state that could undertake those astonishing edifices which we so much admire in antiquity; because in Russia the men are slaves, and, as in Egypt, cost only a few
onions.

onions. It is for this reason we see in Mosco and Petersburg such gigantic edifices. Meanwhile there is not so much as a road to unite these two capitals, which are only distant about two hundred leagues from each other. This also was one of the abortive projects of Catharine; for the road she began is an incumbrance, and renders travelling still more tiresome and impracticable than before. But Catharine preferred expending two or three millions of rubles in building a gloomy marble palace for her favourite, to the forming a road: this latter was too common an undertaking for her genius*.

* Paul, so far from finishing the most useful of those labours begun by his mother, as the quays, canals, and high roads, has built, in his turn, churches and palaces, though there were already more than enough of both in Petersburg. But the monuments he has erected in greatest number, are houses for military exercise, barracks, guard-houses, and particularly centry boxes. Happily, however, all these constructions are of wood, and will hardly outlast their founder.

O Catha-

O Catharine! dazzled by thy greatness, of which I have had a near view; charmed with thy beneficence, which rendered so many individuals happy; seduced by the thousand amiable qualities that have been admired in thee, I would fain have erected a monument to thy glory: but torrents of blood flow in upon me, and inundate my design: the chains of thirty millions of slaves ring in my ears, and deafen me; the crimes which have reigned in thy name call forth my indignation. I throw away my pen, and exclaim, "Let there be henceforth no glory without virtue! Let injustice and depravity be transmitted with no other laurels to posterity than the snakes of Nemesis!"

O Catherine! dazzled by thy greatness,
 of which I have had a near view; charm-
 ed with thy beneficence, which rendered
 to many individuals happy; reduced by the
 thousand amiable qualities that have been
 admitted in thee, I would fain have erect-
 ed a monument to thy glory: but torrents
 of blood flow in upon me, and inundate
 my design: the chains of thirty millions
 of slaves ring in my ears, and deafen me;
 the crimes which have reigned in thy
 name call forth my indignation. I throw
 away my pen, and exclaim, "Let there
 be henceforth no glory without virtue!"
 "Let injustice and depravity be transmut-
 ed with no other laurels to posterity
 than the masks of hypocrisy!"

CHAP. III.

OF THE FAVOURITES.

Their office made a distinct place at court—

The Empress's generosity in this point—

Installation of Zubof—List of the twelve

who enjoyed in succession the title of fa-

vourite—Little Hermitage—Little So-

ciety.

ELIZABETH of England, Mary of Scotland, Christina of Sweden, all the empresses of Russia, and most women who have been their own mistresses, have had favourites or lovers. To consider this as a crime might be thought too rigid and ungallant. Catharine II. alone, however, availed herself of her power to exhibit to the world an example, of which

which there is to be found no model, by making the office of favourite a place at court, with an apartment, salary, honours, prerogatives, and, above all, its peculiar functions; and of all places there was not one, the duties of which were so scrupulously fulfilled: a short absence, a temporary sickness of the person by whom it was occupied, was sometimes sufficient to occasion his removal. Nor perhaps was there any post, in which the empress displayed more choice and discernment: I believe no instance occurred of its having been filled by a person incapable of it; and, except the interregnum between Lanskoi and Yermolof, it was never twenty-four hours vacant.

Twelve favourites succeeded each other in this place, which became the first of the state. Several of these favourites, confining themselves to the principal duty it presented, and having little merit, except the performing

forming that duty well, had scarcely any influence except within the immediate sphere of their peculiar department. Some, however, displayed ambition, audacity, and, above all, self-sufficiency; obtained vast influence, and preserved an ascendancy over the mind of Catharine after having lost her heart; while others continued to retain her friendship and gratitude, and when dismissed from their personal attendance on the empress, were thought worthy of serving the empire in public offices.

It is a very remarkable feature in the character of Catharine, that none of her favourites incurred her hatred or her vengeance, though several of them offended her, and their quitting their office did not depend on herself. No one was ever seen to be punished, no one to be persecuted. Those whom she discarded went into foreign countries, to display her

her presents, and dissipate her treasures, after which they returned, to enjoy her liberalities with tranquillity in the bosom of their country, though their terrible mistress could have crushed them in a moment. In this respect Catharine certainly appears superior to all other women. Was it greatness of mind, or defect of passion? Perhaps she never knew love; perhaps she still respected in her lovers the favours with which she had honoured them.

Soltikof, Orlof, and Lanfkoï, were all of whom she was deprived by death; the rest surviving her love, though they might have exposed her weaknesses, still possessed in quiet places or wealth, which rendered them objects of envy to the whole empire. She contented herself with dismissing Korsakof, whom she surprised even in her own apartments with one of her maids of honour; and she resigned

signed Momonof to a young rival. Assuredly these are very extraordinary features, and very rare, in a woman, a lover, an empress. This great and generous conduct is far removed from that of an Elizabeth of England, who cut off the heads of her favourites and her rivals; and from that of a Christina of Sweden, who caused one of her lovers to be assassinated in her presence.

But Catharine, with all the genius and understanding which she evinced, notwithstanding the exterior decency she affected, must have thoroughly known and despised the Russians, since she ventured so frequently to place by her side young men taken from the people, and hold them up to receive the respect and homage of the whole nation, without any other title to this distinction than one for which she ought to have blushed.

It

It will be sufficient to relate how Zubof, her last favourite, was installed, to shew my indignant readers in what manner these affairs were managed.

Plato * Zubof was a young lieutenant in the horse-guards, patronised by Nicholas Soltikof, to whom he was a distant relation, and to whom my friend, who furnished me with part of these memoirs, was at that time *aide-de-camp*. In this post he frequently found himself by the side of Zubof, and even sought this advantage at table. Zubof spoke French fluently; he had had some education, was of a polite and pliant disposition, could converse a little on literary subjects, and had learned music. He was of a middle size, but supple, muscular, and well made. He had a

* This name led the courtiers to say, that Catharine ended with Platonic love.

high and intelligent forehead, and fine eyes, and his countenance had not that air of coldness and severity mixed with vanity, which it afterwards assumed. When the empress went to Tzarfkofelo, in the spring of 1789, he solicited from his patron the favour of being appointed to command the detachment that attended her, and having obtained it, dined with Catharine. The court had scarcely arrived, when the rupture with Momonof took place. This favourite was married and dismissed. Zubof was the only young officer in sight; and it appears, that he was indebted rather to this fortunate circumstance, than to the deliberate choice of Catharine, for the preference he obtained. Potemkin being absent, Nicholas Soltikof, at that time in high credit, introduced and served the young Zubof with so much the more zeal, hoping to find in him a protector against the haughty Potemkin, whom

whom he heartily disliked. After some secret conferences in presence of the Mentor*, Zubof was approved, and sent for *more ample information* to Miss Protasof and the empress's physician†. The account they gave must have been favourable, for he was named *aide-de-camp* to the empress, received a present of an hundred thousand rubles (20,000*l.*) to furnish himself with linen, and was installed in the apartment of the favourites with all the customary advantages. The next day, this young man was seen familiarly offering his arm to his sovereign, equipped in his new uniform, with a large hat and feather on his head, attended by his patron and the great men of the empire, who walked behind him

* He was governor to the grand-dukes, and minister at war.

† Miss Protasof was called *l'éprouveuse*, from her functions. The physician to the empress was Mr. Rogerfon.

with their hats off, though the day before he had danced attendance in their antichambers.

In the evening, after her card-party was over, Catharine was seen to dismiss her court, and retire, accompanied only by her favourite.

Next day the antichambers of the new idol were filled with aged generals, and ministers of long service, all of whom bent the knee before him. He was a genius discerned by the piercing eye of Catharine; the treasures of the empire were lavished on him, and the conduct of the empress was sanctioned by the meannesses and shameful affiduities of her courtiers*.

Perhaps

* Zubof being one day hunting, stopped with his suit in the road from Petersburg to Tzarsko-selo. The courtiers who were going to court, the couriers,

Perhaps the reader may have some curiosity to peruse a list of those who enjoyed the title of favourite to Catharine, and who reigned over Russia, more or less in the name of their august lover.

I. SERGIUS SOLTIKOF.

It is whispered that he received Catharine's first favours when she was only grand-duchess; a happiness said to have been denied by nature to the unfortunate Peter III. Soltikof, beloved and happy, grew indiscreet, and excited jealousy. Elizabeth civilly banished him from court, and he died in exile*.

the post, all carriages, and all the peasants, were stopped: no one dared pass till the young man thought proper to quit the road; and he staid in it more than an hour, waiting for his game.

* Soltikof had all the wit, agreeableness, and vanity of a young Russian nobleman. He was the only one of Catharine's favourites that she selected from a powerful family. Her heart was not at that time guided by her politics.

soon occasioned him to be forgotten. He was at that time Polish envoy at Petersburg. Handsome, gallant, and lively, he engaged the affections of the young Catharine. Peter III. sometimes interrupted them, though he was little addicted to jealousy, and preferred his pipe, his bottle, his soldiers, and his mistress, to his lovely wife. It is well known that Catharine, when seated on the imperial throne, rewarded her lover with the crown of Poland. His disastrous reign evinced, that love, when it bestows a crown, is as blind, as favour when it distributes places and honours. Stanislaus was the most amiable of men, but the weakest of kings. How was it possible that so pusillanimous a being should for a moment have gained the esteem of Europe? Yet by whom was he

he not admired? How contradictory was his conduct, compared with his sentiments and his language! At the last diet, the generous nuncio Kamar said to him publicly on perceiving him waver, "What, fire! are you no longer the same who said to us, when signing the constitution of the 3d of May, 'May my hand perish rather than it should subscribe anything contrary to this?' All Europe charges you with being Catherine's king: justify her at least for having put the sceptre into your hand, by showing that you are capable of wielding it*." Yet but a few days

* This brave Pole was interrupted in the midst of this spirited speech, and carried off by the Russian satellites Rothenfeld and Pistor, worthy followers of the barbarous Kretschetnikof and Kakofsky. Heavens! what names! They who bore them were still more rugged: yet these were the two men who conquered Poland in one campaign, and overturned the constitution of the 3d of May, which all the nation seemed to defend.

after

after the unworthy Stanislaus signed that compact which dismembered Poland for the second time; and by which he formally acknowledged himself factious and rebellious, for establishing a rational constitution, which gave to him, as king, more authority, and promised his nation more happiness and freedom*. If at

* He did not sign, however, without reluctance. He said to Sievers, who summoned him to repair to Grodno to head the confederates, "I will never be guilty of such baseness. Let the empress take back her crown: let her send me to Siberia, or leave me to go out of my kingdom on foot, with my staff in my hand—I will not dishonor myself." He was confined, kept fasting, threatened, and then placed himself at the head of the confederacy. It was colonel Stackelberg, nephew of Ingelstrœm, who finally brought him the treaty of partition. Stanislaus, on reading it, burst into tears, and said, "O Sir, take pity on me! Let me not be compelled to sign my own disgrace!" Stackelberg told him, that after this sacrifice he might enjoy a happy and tranquil old age. Wiping his eyes, he replied, "Well, I will hope so;" but his niece entering, he again wept plentifully with her.

this

this period he had at least abdicated his dignity, he would have excited regard. He was incapable either of remaining a king, or of ceasing to be one: he had not even the wit and pride of Harlequin, who, when his antagonists were struggling to get from him his wooden sword, and he could defend it no longer, threw it on the ground, saying, "There, take it!" Stanislaus chose rather to drag on an old age of disgrace, and go and die at Petersburg in a state of humiliation*.

Of all the favourites of Catharine, Stanislaus was the only one whom she

* One court day after the accession of the present emperor, Stanislaus, who was in his train, bending under age and fatigue, was obliged to sit down in a corner while three or four hundred courtiers were kissing the hand of Paul. The emperor, perceiving that the old king had seated himself during this ceremony, sent an *aide-de-camp* to him, to order him to keep on his legs.

took

took pleasure in humbling, after having exalted. Loyalty and patriotism, which appeared for an instant to contend with gratitude and submission in the heart of the king, were crimes in the eye of the haughty tzaritza. She was indulgent in love, but implacable in politics: ambition was her ruling passion, yet she always made the lover subservient to the empress.

3. GREGORY ORLOF,
who enjoyed such long and distinguished favour, and whose history is so intimately connected with that of Catharine, seemed to share with her the throne on which he had placed her*. He enjoyed all the power

* If no mention be made of the revolution of 1762 in these Memoirs, it is because Europe is made sufficiently acquainted with it by the history left by Rhulières, which agrees in every point with what is universally known and believed at present. I have repeatedly

power and honours united, which were afterwards seen to adorn Potemkin, and burden Zubof. He had much of the haughtiness and firmness of Potemkin. Though he was young and robust, his brother Alexius, a Hercules in strength and Goliah in stature*, was associated with him in his office. The empress was then in the bloom of life. She avowedly had a son by Gregory, who was named Basil

repeatedly heard the particulars in Russia from persons who were actors in the business, and they were very nearly the same with those which I have since read in Rhulieres.

* It was this Alexius Orlof, who, with Passick and Baratinisky, was concerned in the death of Peter III. He afterwards rendered himself famous by his expeditions in the Archipelago, and particularly by the battle of Tchesme, from which he received the surname of Tchesminsky. His infamy in carrying off from Italy a daughter of the empress Elizabeth, served to render him completely odious and execrable, in spite of his usurped laurels. He is at present banished to Germany, where he endeavours in vain to obtain notice by his luxury and expensive manner of living. He is avoided and detested.

Gregorie-

Gregorievitch Bobrinsky, and educated in the corps of cadets; admiral Ribas, then tutor to that corps, being afterwards appointed his governor*. Two pretty maids of honour, whom Protasof, first *femme-de-chambre*, educated as her nieces, are likewise reputed to be Catharine's daughters by Orlof. It was for this celebrated favorite she erected the gloomy marble palace, the inscription on which informed all the world that it was erected by grateful friendship. In honor of him likewise she ordered a large medal to be struck, on occasion of the journey he took to Mosco to re-establish order, and being particularly

* This Bobrinsky strongly resembles his mother in the face, and whoever sees the head of Catharine on a ruble, may see the likeness of her son. He has distinguished himself by his disorderly life, though he has sense, and is not devoid of information. He was banished to Esthonia, but Paul recalled him at his accession, and made him a major in the horse-guards. Not long after, however, he fell into disgrace.

instru-

instrumental in stopping the dreadful ravages of the plague. On this medal he is represented as Curtius, leaping into the gulf, with this inscription: *Russia too can boast such sons.* The palace of Gatchina, now inhabited by Paul, is another monument to prince Orlof. Twelve years intimacy, added to the haughtiness of this lover, at length wearied his sovereign, now firmly established on the throne; and, after a long contest, Potemkin bore off the laurel. The triumph of his rival, and the inconstancy of Catharine, whom he openly accused of ingratitude, had such an effect on him, that his health was destroyed, his mind deranged, and the once proud, powerful, and magnificent Orlof died in the most horrible state of insanity and human infirmity*.

* Many assert that Potemkin poisoned him with an herb, which possesses the quality of turning the brain, and which the Russians call *piannaia trava*, "drunkard's plant."

4. VASSILTSCHIKOF,

whom Panin introduced during an absence of Orlof, filled up the interval that took place between the two haughty rivals. He was merely the tool of Catharine's pleasures.

5. POTECHKIN

came one day, and boldly seized on the apartments of his predecessor; thus proclaiming his victory, by making himself master of the field of battle, so long disputed against him. His love, his valour, and his colossal stature, had charmed Catharine. He was the only one of her favourites who dared become enamoured of her, and to make the first advances. It appeared that he was truly and romantically

[tically captivated by her*. He first adored his sovereign as a mistress, and then cherished her as his glory. These two great characters seemed formed for each other: their affection was mutual; and when they ceased to love, they still continued to esteem each other: politics and ambition united them, when Love had dissolved his bands.

* There is a Russian song of his extant, beginning *Kakskoroia tebe vidal*, &c. which he composed when first in love. It breathes sentiment, and deserves to be translated. The following is the sense of what I recollect of it: “As soon as I beheld thee, I thought of thee alone: thy lovely eyes captivated me, yet I trembled to say I loved. To thee, Love subjects every heart, and enchains them with the same flowers. But, O heavens! what torment, to love one to whom I dare not declare it! one who can never be mine! Cruel gods! why have you given her such charms? or why did you exalt her so high? Why did you destine me to love her, and her alone? her, whose sacred name will never pass my lips, whose charming image will never quit my heart!” &c.

I leave

I leave to travellers the office of describing the pomp of his entertainments, the laborious luxury of his house, and the value of his diamonds; and to German scribblers, to relate how many bank-notes he had bound up as books in his library, and what he paid for the cherries, a plate of which he was accustomed to present every new year's day to his august sovereign; or the cost of his sturgeon soup, which was his favourite dish; or how many hundred miles he would send a courier for a melon, or a nosegay, to present to one of his mistresses*. They

* Potemkin had in his suit an officer of high rank, named Bauer, whom he sent sometimes to Paris for a dancer, then to Astrakan for a water-melon; now to Poland, to carry orders to his tenants; to Petersburg, to carry news to Catharine; or to the Crimea, to gather grapes. This officer, who thus spent his life travelling post, requested an epitaph to be ready for him in case he should break his neck, and one of his friends gave him the following:

Cy git Bauer sous ce rocher :

Fouelle, cocher !

" Here Bauer lies, beneath this stone :

" Coachman, drive on !"

who

who wish to see a characteristic portrait of him, may find one drawn in a superior manner in the work intituled *Histoire de Catharine II.*; as the particulars of Potemkin's life would carry me too far. Besides, one of my friends who attended him in his campaigns is at present employed on the subject, and is more capable of satisfying the curiosity of the public respecting this extraordinary man.

He created, destroyed, or confused, yet animated everything. When absent, he alone was the subject of conversation; when present, he engaged every eye. The nobles, who detested him, and who made some figure when he was with the army, seemed at his sight to sink into nothingness, and to be annihilated before him. The prince de Ligne, who was his tale-bearer and flatterer*, said, "There
" is

* He told him, in one of his letters, which the prince's vanity induced him to make no secret: "Your
" august

“is something barbarously romantic in
“his character:” and he spoke the truth.
His death left an immense void in the
empire, and that death was as extraor-
dinary as his life. He had spent nearly
a year at Petersburg, indulging in all
kinds of pleasure, and even debauchery,
forgetting his glory, and displaying his
wealth and influence with insulting pomp.
He received the greatest men of the em-
pire as footmen, scarcely deigned to no-
tice the grand-duke, and sometimes en-
tered Catharine’s apartments with his legs
bare, his hair about his ears, and in a morn-
ing gown. Old marshal Repnin avail-
ed himself of his absence from the army
to beat the Turks, and force them to de-

“august and amiable sovereign is indebted to you for
“more marks of gallantry than Louis XIV. was to
“all his courtiers together.” The surmise, however,
was wrong. The duke de la Feuillade erected a su-
perb statue to his master at his own expense. Potem-
kin never paid Catharine a compliment equal to this.

mand

mand peace, doing more in two months than Potemkin had done in three years. The latter, who wished still to prolong the war, was roused at the news, and set off*; but he carried death in his veins. On his arrival at Jassy, where his head-quarters had long been established, or, to speak more properly, his capital and his court, he was gloomy, melancholy, consumed with vexation, and impatient under his disease. He determined to wrestle with it, and overcome

* His interview with Repnin was an amusing scene: "You little martinist priest (1)," said he, "how dared you undertake so many things in my absence? Who gave thee any such orders?" Repnin, enraged at this speech, and emboldened by success, dared for once behave to him with firmness. "I have served my country, he answered: my head is not at thy disposal, and thou art a devil whom I defy." Saying this, he went out of the room in a rage, shutting the door on Potemkin, who followed him with his clenched fist. The two heroes of Russia were within an ace of going to loggerheads together.

(1) Repnin was a zealous Martinist.

it by his iron constitution: he laughed at his physicians, and ate salt meat and raw turnips. His disease grew worse: he would be conveyed to Otchakof, his beloved conquest; but he had scarcely advanced a few miles, before the air of his carriage seemed to stifle him. His cloak was spread by the road-side; he was laid on it, and there expired in the arms of his niece Branicka, who accompanied him. Catharine fainted three times when she heard of his death: it was necessary to bleed her: she was thought to be dying. She expressed almost as much grief as at the death of Lanskoï: but it was not the lover she regretted; it was the friend, whose genius was assimilated with her own, whom she considered as the support of her throne, and the executor of her vast projects. Catharine, holding an usurped sceptre, was a woman, and timid: she was accustomed to behold in Potem-

kin a protector, whose fortune and glory were intimately connected with her own. She appeared to feel herself again a stranger; she began to fear her son, and now took for her support her grandson Alexander, who was just rising out of infancy, with intent to oppose him to his father.

What a contrast, what a lesson, does the death of the three greatest personages in Russia offer! Orlof, who reigned twelve years by the side of Catharine, died in a state of wretched insanity. Potemkin, the powerful, the magnificent Potemkin, the founder of so many palaces and cities, the conqueror of a kingdom, expired on the road-side; and Catharine herself fell down in her water-closet, and died on the floor with a lamentable shriek!

The wealth of Potemkin has been exaggerated: it was far short of that of
Ment-

Mentchikof, and still less of what the unworthy Biren amassed. Even the last favourite possessed more. It is true Potemkin had immediate access to the treasures of the state; but he also spent a great deal for the state, and shewed himself as much grand-prince of Russia as favorite of Catharine. Zubof had equal command over the public treasury, and never expended a ruble for the public.

Potemkin was distinguished from all his colleagues in not losing the confidence of the empress when he no longer possessed her heart. Ambition succeeded love in his breast, and he still retained all his influence, insomuch that every succeeding favorite was appointed by him, and remained subordinate to him.

6. ZAVADOFSKY

was the man whom Potemkin presented to Catharine, to succeed in fulfilling the office of private favorite. He was young, vigorous, and well made; but Catharine's inclination for him was soon at an end. He had been secretary: his disgrace made no noise; he continued to be employed in the affairs of the cabinet, and was made a privy counsellor.

7. ZORITCH,

on whom the inconstant Catharine next cast her eye, is the only foreigner whom she ventured to create favorite during her reign. He was a *Servian*, who had been taken prisoner by the Turks, and made his escape from Constantinople, where he was confined as a slave. He
appeared

appeared at court for the first time in the dress of an hussar. His beauty dazzled every eye, and the old ladies in Russia still speak of him as an Adonis. Protected at first by Potemkin, he was desirous of shaking off his yoke, quarrelled with him, and challenged him to fight a duel. His mind was not sufficiently cultivated to captivate that of Catharine, who dismissed him at the end of twelve months loaded with favours. He obtained the town of Schklof, which was erected into a kind of sovereignty for him, an instance singular of its kind in Russia. There he lives as a prince, holding a court, and receiving strangers. If he be enriched with the spoils of the state, he returns part of them to it very nobly. He has founded at Schklof a corps of cadets, where two hundred young officers are educated at his expense. Notwithstanding these occupations, and the gaming, theatrical exhibitions,

bitions, and other amusements in which he engages, and by which he ruins himself, he is tired of his principality. Some years ago he is said to have solicited permission to make his appearance again: it was not granted. Paul, however, has just called him to court.

8. KORSAKOF,

a sort of Russian fop, was raised to the rank of favorite from that of serjeant in the guards at the palace, where Catharine noticed him. He was either faithless or ungrateful. Catharine herself surprised him in the arms of the handsome countess Bruce, her maid of honor and confidant. Struck with astonishment, she withdrew, and would never again see her lover or her friend. This was the only vengeance she exercised against them.

9. LANSKOI,

one of the horse-guards, had obtained some reputation*. He was soon the most beloved of Catharine's lovers, and appeared most worthy to be so. He was handsome, graceful, and accomplished, an admirer of the arts, a friend to talents, humane, and beneficent. Every one seemed to share the sovereign's predilection for him. Perhaps he would have acquired as much influence by the

* All the officers who had, or thought they had, fine persons, endeavoured on every occasion to throw themselves in Catharine's way. Even at court, the nobles would sometimes give place to a handsome man, knowing that nothing pleased their sovereign so well as to traverse her apartments between two rows of handsome youths. It was a situation which men eagerly sought after, and exhibited themselves to the greatest advantage; and, indeed, many families founded their hopes on some young relation, whom they compelled to throw himself in the way of such good fortune.

qualities

qualities of his mind, as those of his heart procured him partisans. Potemkin feared him, and, *it is said*, gave him poison. He died with horrible pains in his bowels. Catharine in vain lavished on him the most tender cares: her lips received his last breath. She shut herself up for several days, which she passed in all the violence of grief. She accused heaven, would die, would cease to reign, and swore never to love again. She really loved Lanskoi, and her affliction turned into rage against the physician, who could not save him, and who was obliged to throw himself at his sovereign's feet, and request her pardon for the impotence of his art. A decent and afflicted widow, she went into mourning for her lover, and, a new Artemisia, erected for him a superb mausoleum near Tzarsko-felo. She suffered more than a year to elapse before his place was again filled; but, like another Ephesian matron,

tron, she gave him an unworthy successor. This was

10. YERMOLOF,

the least amiable, and least striking in figure of all she had chosen, who was at length to console her for the handsome, the tender Lanskoï. He displeased Potemkin, however, before he ceased to please Catharine, and the haughty prince demanded, and obtained, the dismissal of this favorite, who did not continue two years in office.

11. MOMONOF,

who had disputed the place with Yermolof, succeeded to it. Momonof was amiable, and his bust was a perfect model; but he was not well made. Catharine approved and loved him, and would have done
so

so long; but he was soon disgusted with the faded charms of a mistress of sixty.

He became enamoured of the young princess Scherbatof, and had the courage to avow it, demanding permission to marry her. Catharine had pride and generosity sufficient to grant his request, without any reproaches. She saw him married at court to the object of his honorable attachment, and sent him to Mosco loaded with presents.

12. ZUBOF.

THE rise of this last favorite has been explained at the beginning of this chapter. He was not quite five-and-twenty years old, the empress was upwards of sixty*. She finished by treating

* Catharine was two years older than the almanac expressed. As she was older than Peter III. Elizabeth took off these two years when she sent for her into Russia;

ing him as much like a child as a lover, took upon herself the care of his education, and grew more and more attached to her own work, which became her idol. Yet even at this advanced period of her life she was seen to revive the orgies and lupercalia which she had formerly celebrated with the brothers Orlof. Valerian, a younger brother of Zubof, and Peter Soltikof, their friend, were associated in office with the favorite. With these three young libertines did Catharine, the aged Catharine, spend her days, while her armies were slaughtering the Turks, fighting with the Swedes, and ravaging Poland; while her people were groaning in wretchedness and famine, and devoured by extortioners and tyrants.

Russia; and there are old German calendars, which prove that she was born in 1727. This is but an opinion, however, which several dispute, and which I have it not in my power to verify.

It

It was at this juncture she formed a more intimate society, composed of her favorites and most trusty ladies and courtiers. This society met two or three times a week, under the name of the *Little Hermitage*. The parties were frequently masqued, and the greatest privacy prevailed. They danced, represented proverbs, played, joked, romped, and engaged in all sorts of frolics and gambols (*jouoit à des jeux d'esprit, à des jeux de gages, et à des jeux de mains*): in short, there was no kind of gaiety which was not permitted. Leof Narishkin acted the same part there as Roquelaure at the court of Louis XIV; and a fool by title, Matrona Danilofna, seconded him. This was an old gossip, whose wit consisted only in uttering the most absurd vulgarities; and as she enjoyed the common right of fools, that of saying anything, she was loaded with presents by the lower order of courtiers. Such foreign ministers

sters as enjoyed the favor of the empress, were sometimes admitted to the Little Hermitage. Segur, Cobenzel, Steuding, and Nassau, chiefly enjoyed this distinction; but Catharine afterwards formed another assembly, more confined and more mysterious, which was called the *Little Society*. The three favorites of whom we have just been speaking, Branicka, Protasof, and some confidential women and *valets-de-chambre*, were its only members. In this the Cybele of the north celebrated her most secret mysteries. The particulars of these amusements are not fit to be repeated, and the public will lose nothing worth preserving by their remaining concealed. The author has burned all his memorandums, which could have afforded any information on the subject.

I might have enlarged this chapter with the surnames, titles, and dignities of each favorite ;

favorite ; but they would not be worth paper and print, and do not deserve even to be mentioned. It is well known that Catharine, after having heaped upon her minions all the places, titles, and orders of knighthood of Russia, wrote to Vienna to obtain for them successively patents of count and prince of the Holy Roman Empire. The orders of Poland and Prussia bedaubed also the favorites of the favorites. Potemkin and Zubof, when they displayed all their decorations, looked like the hawkers of ribands and trinkets at a fair.

Paul is more of a Russian than his mother: he is of opinion, that a count or prince of the Greek empire is superior to a count or prince of the Roman empire. Under Catharine, the Russian kniaz was made a German prince; under Paul, the German prince is raised to the dignity of a Russian kniaz. I shall not take upon

†

me

me to decide the question of precedence.

In like manner I shall pass over the gifts and presents bestowed on the favorites. I could mention only what they have received publicly as recompenses; and however enormous the sum may appear*, it was not equal to the gifts lavished on them in secret. Who can calculate what the Orlofs, Potemkin, and the Zubofs received? Had they not access to the imperial treasury, without rendering any account of the sums they took from it? and were not places, rank, justice, impunity, nay, even foreign alliances, peace and war, purchased of them and of their creatures†?

* I have a pretty accurate list: the sum is greater by one third than that given in the book intitled, *Histoire de Catharine II.*

† Valerian Zubof, a few months after he had shared with his brother the favors of Catharine, staked thirty thousand rubles (30000l.) on a single card at faro; and this young man possesses, as has been observed, part of the immense domains of the dukes of Courland.

me to decide the question of peace.

denot.

In this manner I shall pass over the gifts and presents bestowed on the Russian. I could mention only what they have received publicly as recompenses; and however enormous the sum may appear, it was not equal to the gifts for which on their part. Who can calculate what the Old, Potemkin, and the Nobles received? Had they not access to the imperial treasury, without rendering any account of the sums they took from it, and were not placed, rank, and title, impunity, nay, even foreign alliances, peace and war, purchased of them and of their creatures?

I have a pretty accurate notion of the sum given to the Russian, but I have not time to give it.

It is a sum of a few millions, and I have heard with his brother the Count of Orléans, that the Russian (as he is called) is a young man of noble birth, as has been observed, part of the immense domain of the Duke of Courland.

CHAP. IV.

ACCESSION OF PAUL.

Conduct and projects of Catharine with regard to her son—He is proclaimed—His first steps as Emperor—Funeral honors paid to his father and mother—Rigorous proceedings towards the guards—The wacht-parade—Favors and disgraces—His occupations—Proscription of round hats and Russian harness—Re-establishment of etiquette—Its ridiculous or cruel consequences—Change in the army, and in civil affairs—Peasants—Soldato-mania—Office of punishment—Finances.

ONE of the greatest crimes of which Catharine was guilty, was her conduct to that son in whose right she governed Russia five-and-thirty years.

In his infancy he evinced qualities which were stifled by her ill treatment. He had sense, activity, a disposition for the sciences, and sentiments of order and justice: but all these perished for want of being cultivated. Her dislike towards him has been urged as a proof of his being the son of Peter III. and this proof is of considerable weight. She could not bear him, kept him at a distance from her, surrounded him with spies, held him in restraint, exposed him to every kind of humiliation; and while her favorites, inferior to her son in years, governed Russia and wallowed in wealth, he lived retired, insignificant, and in want of necessaries. Thus she soured his temper, and rendered him capricious and suspicious. Assuredly a mother must be highly culpable who inspires her own child with hatred and contempt. But what other sentiments could he entertain? Not satisfied with
depriv-

depriving him of the affection and prerogatives that he ought to have enjoyed as a son, she resolved to take from him likewise the rights and pleasures of a father. His wife came almost every year to lay-in at Tzariko-felo, and left her children there in the hands of strangers. They were brought up under Catharine, without the father or mother having the least influence in their education, or authority over their conduct. Latterly, they were even whole months without seeing them. Thus she sought to alienate the hearts of these children from parents whom they scarcely knew. Here, however, Paul ceases to inspire interest; here he no longer appears the timid and respectful child, but the fearful, imbecil father. What man is base enough not to claim the sacred rights of pater-nity? Why had he not the spirit to say to his mother, “ You have my crown;

“ keep it; but restore me my children:
 “ leave me at least an enjoyment which
 “ you do not envy in your lowest slaves.”
 He who finds not in his heart sufficient
 motives to hold such language, and to
 act conformably to it, deserves not praise
 as a respectful son, but rather blame as a
 thoughtless, unfeeling father*.

Death took Catharine by surprise. It
 is evident to those who were acquainted
 with her court, and the unfortunate
 estrangement between the mother and
 son, that she entertained a wish to have
 another successor. The dread of reflect-
 ing on the end of her days, and on that
 of her reign, which she feared still more,

* The duke of Wurtemberg, brother to the pre-
 sent empress, acted in a more becoming manner. Ca-
 tharine being desirous of taking charge of his children,
 he declared that he would rather die than give them up.
 She durst not venture to proceed to extremities, and he
 took them with him out of the country.

with

with the death of Potemkin*, prevented her from accomplishing this project, while she had time for it, or from confirming it by a will. The youth of the grand-duke Alexander, and still more the goodness of his head and heart, were afterwards obstacles to the execution of her design. Her predilection for the young prince, however, worthy no doubt of a purer source, was very striking; and her private conferences with him began to be frequent and mysterious. Perhaps she might in time have succeeded in endeavours to stifle in him the voice of nature, have corrupted his understanding and his morals, and driven him imperceptibly to act a detestable part towards his father. After La Harpe had quitted him, after a separate court was established for him,

* Many have supposed that she entertained a design of making Potemkin king of Taurica, in order to have his support in disinheriting Paul, and proclaiming Alexander tzarevitch.

and

and some persons of merit removed; he was the worst attended and least occupied of princes. His days were spent alone with his wife, or with his valets, or in the society of his grandmother. He lived more effeminate and obscure than the heir of a sultan in the haram of a seraglio. This kind of life must at length have stifled all his excellent qualities. Had he been willing, or had Catharine even been able to speak but a few words before she died, Paul probably would never have reigned. Who would have declared for him? and to what rights could he have appealed*?

If

* I am aware that Paul was proclaimed tzarevitch, or heir to the throne. Since his accession, he has attempted to remove the confusion that prevails in the succession of the tzars, by an act which he promulgated at his coronation, and which he had framed in concert with his wife, in the form of a will, so early as the year 1788; consequently when he was only grand-duke, and of course could dispose of nothing. The year 1788 was the time when Potemkin was in the zenith

If the Russians have no fixed rights, still
 less have their sovereigns. Since Peter I.
 who

zenith of his power. It appears that Paul, at that
 juncture, apprehended some unhappy catastrophe,
 since he made these arrangements: in fact, it was
 then in agitation to disinherit him, and divide the
 empire between his eldest son and Potemkin.

In this act, Paul, though merely grand-duke, arro-
 gates to himself the same right as Peter I.—that of no-
 minating his successor. Accordingly he bequeaths
 the empire to his eldest son, and his male descendants;
 failing these also, his female descendants were to suc-
 ceed in an order which Paul laid down, endeavouring
 to prevent and regulate all the inconveniences that
 could occur to the end of time.

That the son should be heir to his father is a natural
 right, but there can be no right by which an empe-
 ror shall nominate his successor, and bequeath an em-
 pire like an estate. Let us suppose, however, that a
 Russian sovereign is actually possessed of this power,
 how can one take it from the rest, or restrict it, by no-
 minating the successor of his successor? Is not Alex-
 ander or Constantine to enjoy the same power as Paul?
 Is it not treasonable to imagine the contrary? Such
 are the inconveniences in which they involve them-
 selves who build upon errors and prejudices, and con-
 temn the laws of nature and nations. The laws which
 issue from their brains having no support but the power
 that promulgates them, perish with it. A hundred
 years

who arrogated to himself the power of nominating his successor, the throne of the tzars has been occupied by scarcely any other than usurpers, who have overturned each other with more barbarity and confusion than the successors of Ottoman. Catharine I. became empress, because Mentchikof had the boldness to proclaim her*; Peter II. reigned by virtue of a will; Anne was elected by a council, the senate, and the army; Ivan was made emperor by an ukase; Elizabeth said, in her manifesto, that she ascended the throne of her father because the people willed it, and the guards revolted; and on these grounds she con-

years hence, a Russian emperor will not tumble over the old papers of Paul, to know how he shall act; for before that time, perhaps, events may take place which will inspire into the minds of the Russians ideas more clear and simple.

* It was pleasantly said on that occasion, that a journeyman pastry-cook proclaimed a servant-maid empress of all the Russias.

herbert A. in new diary most enough demned

demned a prince in the cradle to a perpetual prison; and his relations, as innocent as himself, experienced the same fate. Peter III. reigned by favor of Elizabeth; and when he was dethroned, Catharine II. ascending the throne of Russia, declared, that heaven itself had called her to it. A son supplanting his father would not, after such a series, have excited any remarkable disgust, but the sudden death of Catharine happily prevented that catastrophe. The dreadful shriek she gave as she expired, was the voice that proclaimed Paul emperor of all the Russias. His wife was the first who fell at his feet, and paid him homage with all her children: he raised her up, embraced her and them, giving them assurance of his imperial and paternal kindness. The court, the chief officers of the different departments and of the army, all who were on the spot, came then to prostrate themselves, and take the oath
to

to him, each according to his rank and seniority. A detachment of guards conducted him into the palace, and the officers and soldiers arriving in haste from Pavlofsky and Gatshina, swore fealty to him; the heads of the different colleges hastened to take the same oath. The emperor repaired himself to the senate to receive it; and this memorable night passed without disturbance or confusion.

The next day, Paul was proclaimed emperor everywhere, and his son Alexander *tzarevitch*, or heir presumptive to the throne. Thus, after five-and-thirty years spent amid restraint, denials, offences, and contempt, the son of Catharine, at the age of forty-three, found himself at length master of himself, and of all the Russias. The first steps which he took seemed to contradict the reports of his stern and capricious disposition. He had long suffered by the abuses
and

and disorders of the court: bred in the school of misfortune, the crucible in which great minds are refined, and little ones evaporate; a distant spectator of affairs, scrutinizing the plans and conduct of his mother, he had had thirty years leisure to regulate his own. Accordingly it appeared that he had in his pocket a multitude of regulations ready drawn up, which he had nothing to do but to unfold, and put in execution with astonishing rapidity*.

Far from imitating the conduct which his mother had held with respect to him, he immediately called his sons about him, entrusted each with the command of one of the regiments of guards, and made the elder military governor of Peterf-

* His intimates had long been in possession of his military regulations, which he put in execution at Gatchina and Pavlofsky, and which in a moment became those of all the Russian armies.

burg,

burg, an important post, which chained the young prince to his father's side. His first behaviour towards the empress surprised and delighted every one. He suddenly changed his conduct towards her, assigned her a considerable revenue, increased those of his children in proportion, and loaded his family with caresses and kindnesses.

His conduct towards the favorite likewise had every feature of generosity. He appeared moved with his affliction; and, acknowledging the attachment he shewed to his mother, continued him in his offices in flattering terms; saying, when he delivered to him the cane of command, which is borne by the general *aide-de-camp* upon duty: "Continue to execute those functions about the corpse of my mother: I hope you will serve me as faithfully as you have served her."

The

The ministers, and the heads of the different departments, were likewise confirmed in their employ in condescending terms; and the most powerful were even promoted, and loaded with additional favors.

The first ukase he issued announced pacific dispositions, and must particularly have attached the nobility to him. A levy of recruits recently ordered by Catharine, which would have taken one peasant in every hundred, was suspended and annulled by this ukase. This levy, however, was a few months after renewed.

Every hour, every moment announced some wise change, some just punishment, or some merited favor. The court and city were surprised. People began to imagine that his character had been mistaken, and that his long and melancholy

choly pupillage had not entirely depraved it. All the world saw itself happily deceived in its expectations, and the conduct of the grand-duke was forgotten in that of the emperor ; but which was too soon brought again into remembrance. Let us bestow a few minutes more on the hopes of happiness which he promised his empire.

The first two political steps taken by Paul inspired confidence, gained the nobility, and suspended two horrible scourges which Catharine, at her death, seemed to have bequeathed to Prussia—war, and a state bankruptcy. She had at length resolved to act directly against France, by succouring the emperor of Germany, and attacking Prussia*. In consequence,

* This scheme of Catharine is incontrovertible: she resolved to drive the king of Prussia back to the borders of the Rhine with her cannon. To make him feel the absolute necessity of returning to the coalition, she fomented revolts in Prussia, at Dantzic, and in Silesia.

she

she had issued orders for raising near a hundred thousand recruits. The coffers of the state being emptied, and assignats multiplied to such a point, that they were threatened with the same fate as those of France*; she thought proper to double her current coin, by giving every piece of money twice its former value. Paul quashed these two disastrous measures, which had already begun to be carried into execution. At the same time he broke off the treaty of subsidy with England which was on the carpet; not that it was his intention, as had been published abroad, to acknowledge the French republic, but because his imperial pride was, not without reason, above entering into the pay of England, like a petty state†.

Kosciuszko

* At this juncture they fell sixty per cent.

† It is said, however, that he receives at present large subsidies from England, but it is in English goods; and Paul has established warehouses, where they are sold

Kosciuszko, who has been called the last of the Poles, as Philopœmen was the last of the Greeks, was made prisoner of war, as all the world knows, when defending his country against the attacks of foreigners. He was, however, detained as a state criminal, though he was always better treated * than Ignatius

fold on his account. This trade of the crown is not new: several of the Siberian tribes pay their taxes in kind; and, during the reign of Elizabeth, the trade with China was carried on by government. It even sometimes happened, that for want of money the officers of the army were paid in goods from the warehouses of the crown; as tea, cloth, and furs. These measures of Paul will prove infallible means of quickly conveying to England the little current coin left in his country, and he will soon be obliged to pay his whole army likewise in English hardware.

* He was in the house of the late count Anhalt. For a guard he had a major, who sat at table with him. People were permitted to see him; he had several rooms at his command, and he employed himself in reading, drawing, and turning. The colonel, to whom he was conducted as prisoner by the chasseurs, who found him wounded in a marsh, is a young man, a friend of mine,

tius Pototski, and his other companions in misfortune, who were more rigorously confined in the fortrefs, and at Schlusfelburg. Paul gave liberty to them all, and was generous enough to go himself to deliver Kosciuszko from confinement. It was interesting to see this brave man, still sick of his wounds and grief, carried to the palace, where he was introduced to the emperor and empress,

mine, equally brave and humane. He kept a pocket-book of Kosciuszko's, which we looked over together. We found in it several notes, in French and Italian, taken during a tour in Italy, philosophical observations, extracts from authors, effusions in French verse, and rough draughts of various small compositions. Every thing showed that the pocket-book had belonged to a man of merit, knowledge, taste, and feeling. There were in it likewise several letters sealed, and addressed to ladies at Warsaw, in French and Polish, with sketches of some of the manifestoes he published, all in his own hand-writing. My friend kept this pocket-book as a relic of a celebrated man whom he had admired, while forced to fight against him. When he was set at liberty, I suggested to my friend the idea of returning these papers to their owner, and I believe he did so.

to testify his gratitude to them. He is a little thin person, pale and emaciated: his head was still surrounded with bandages, and his forehead could not be seen: but his mien, his eyes, still brought to remembrance what he dared attempt with such feeble means. He refused the peasants that Paul would have given him in Russia, but accepted a sum of money to go and live independent in another country*.

This circumstance made a great and favorable impression on the public. Unquestionably it did honor to Paul; but, to appreciate his conduct on this occasion, it must be remembered, that

* America was the place he chose for his residence. When he was in England, on his way thither, a model of him was taken by Miss C. Andras, which is said to be a striking likeness, and from which an elegant whole length engraving has been made by Sharpe.—*Tr.*

Kosci-

Kosciuszko had not personally offended him, though he had the empress Catharine. Perhaps, therefore, Kosciuszko is indebted for his liberty to Paul's affectation of acting contrary to his mother in every respect.

The funeral honors to be paid to the empress, were another happy circumstance to engage the mind of Paul; thus suspending or interrupting the torrent of new regulations; but, what was not expected of him, he considered it as a filial duty to remove the ashes of his unfortunate father. The name of Peter III. which no one had dared to pronounce for five-and-thirty years, appeared on a sudden at the head of the ceremonial of mourning and interment; and the services to be performed, and funeral honors paid to Peter and Catharine, were prescribed at the same time. On reading the *prekase*, it might have been supposed

that the husband and wife had just departed together. Paul repaired to the convent of Alexander Nefsky, where the body of his father had been deposited. Causing the old monks to shew him the private grave, and open the coffin in his presence, he paid the sad remains that still presented themselves to his eyes, a tribute of respectful and affecting tears*. The coffin was placed on high in the middle of the church, and the same service was performed by it as by that of Catharine, which was exposed to view on a bed of state in the palace.

Paul then caused a search to be made for those officers who were attached to

* He took one of the gloves, that still covered the remains of his father, and kissed it several times with tears. O Paul! thou hadst then the heart of a son; sometimes thou hast appeared a good father! What might not have been expected from another mother, and a different education!

his

his father at the time of his unhappy catastrophe, and who had since lived in disgrace or unknown at court. Baron Ungern Sternberg, a respectable old man, who had long lived in retirement amid a small circle of friends, and who had not even a wish to be brought forward again upon the stage of the great world, was at once made general in chief, and sent for to the emperor, who ordered him to be ushered into his closet. After receiving him in the most gracious manner, he said, "Have you heard what I am doing for my father?"—"Yes, Sire," answered the old general, "I have heard it with astonishment."—"With astonishment! why? is it not a duty I had to fulfil? See," continued he, turning to a picture of Peter III. which was already placed in the closet*, "I will have

* All the pictures of Peter III. had been proscribed, both in the imperial palaces and private houses. How Paul contrived to conceal this I cannot tell.

Happy,

“have him to witness my gratitude towards his faithful friend.” Saying these words, he embraced general Ungern, and invested him with the riband of St. Alexander. The worthy old man, although he was little dazzled with this vanity, could not resist so affecting a scene, and retired with his eyes swimming in tears.

Paul then directed him to do duty by his father's body, enjoining him to provide for the ceremony the same uniform as he had worn when *aide-de-camp* to Peter III. Ungern was lucky enough to find such a one in the possession of an old acquaintance. Paul would see this relic; he kept it himself, and it made the fortune of him who had so well preserved

Happy, at this period, he who could find one of these portraits in a lumber-room, to which it had been banished: it presently became the chief ornament of his house. The painters of Petersburg could not supply the demand for copies.

it*. Several other officers, and among them the only one who had attempted to make

* General Ungern Sternberg is a Livonian, and was formerly the friend and comrade of general Melissino. The writer of these Memoirs has been very intimate with him, which he mentions here, to give more weight to what follows. Ungern was one of those German officers who stood highest in Peter's esteem, and was his *aide-de-camp*. It was he whom he chose to accompany him in a secret visit which he paid to the unfortunate Ivan at Schlusfelburg, where he had been confined by Elizabeth, who dethroned him. They found this wretched young man in a dungeon, the window of which admitted but a faint gleam of day, the light being intercepted by piles of wood heaped up in the court. He was in a very dirty white jacket, with a pair of old shoes on his feet. His hair was very light, and cut short like that of a Russian slave. He was tolerably well made, and his complexion had a paleness which shewed that the sun had never shone on his face. He was then upwards of twenty, and had been confined ever since he was fourteen months old; but he had received some impressions and ideas which he still retained. Peter III, affected at his condition, put several questions to him; among the rest, "Who are you?"—"I am the emperor."—"Who put you into prison, then?"—"Vile, wicked people."—"Would you like to be emperor again?"—"To

make any resistance in favor of Peter III. at the revolution in 1762, were found out in

—“ To be sure: why not? I should then have fine
“ clothes, and servants to wait upon me.”—“ But what
“ would you do if you were emperor?”—“ I would
“ cut off the heads of all those who have wronged
“ me.” Peter III. having then asked whence he learned what he told him; he answered, that he had it from the Virgin and the angels, and began to enter into long stories of these pretended visions. Though alone, and confined from his infancy, he did not appear terrified at the sight of the emperor and his officers. He examined his dress and weapons with much curiosity and pleasure, as a bold child would have done. The emperor asked him again what he wished for, and he answered in his vulgar Russian dialect, “ To have
“ more air.” Ungern was left some time at Schlusberg to gain his confidence, and find out whether his apparent imbecility were only assumed. He was soon convinced, however, that it was the natural consequence of his mode of life. He gave him, from the emperor, a silk morning gown. Ivan put it on with transports of joy, running about the room, and admiring himself as a savage would have done who had never been dressed before. As all his wishes centred in the requisition of more air, Peter III. sent the plan of a little circular palace, in the centre of which was to be a garden, with orders to have it built for Ivan in the court of the fortress. It was cruel, that this act of humanity

in their retirement, and recalled to court, to be loaded with favors.

These particulars are affecting, and do honor to the heart of Paul; but it appears from the answer of Ungern, that they astonished every one. Some attribute them as much to Paul's opposition to his mother as to his love for his father; and several ascribe this part of his conduct to a politic design of thus proclaiming him for his father, who would not, when alive, acknowledge him for his son. The parade and ostentation with which he caused the sad remains of Peter to be disinterred, and then held up to the admiration of the public, were particularly blamed. The coffin that con-

manity towards an innocent man should have served as a pretext against the unfortunate Peter. He was charged with having intended to build a prison for his wife and son, and this was made a pretext for his own assassination.

tained

tained them was crowned*, and removed in great pomp to the palace, to be exhibited there, in a temple constructed for the purpose, by the side of the corpse of Catharine, with which it was afterwards to be conveyed to the citadel. Then alone did the husband and wife rest together in peace. People came with great respect to kiss the coffin of the one, and the cold and livid hand of the other; they made a genuflexion, and were obliged to descend the stairs backwards. The empress, who had been badly embalmed, soon appeared quite disfigured: her hands, eyes, and lower part of her face, were black, blue, and yellow. Those, who had seen her only in public, could not know her again; and all the pomp with which she was still surrounded, all the

* Peter III. had never been crowned, and this was the reason assigned for not burying him in the citadel with the other Russian emperors.

riches that covered her corpse, served only to augment the horror it inspired.

If, by restoring the honors of his father, Paul might be thought by any to throw disgrace on the memory of his mother, by bringing to mind the scenes which five-and-thirty years silence had nearly consigned to oblivion, yet the vengeance he took on some of the assassins of Peter III. possessed a degree of sublimity which was approved by all. The celebrated Alexius Orlof, the conqueror of Tchefine, once so powerful, remarkable for his gigantic stature and antique dress, and whose age and military honors would have entitled him to respect, if such a man could be respected, was obliged to follow the sad remains of Peter. Every eye was turned upon him, and the performance of this just, but cruel task, must have awakened in him that remorse which his long prosperity had

had no doubt lulled asleep. As to prince Baratinsky, he durst not appear before Paul, who could never bear his sight, but had fled from Petersburg. Passick, who owed his fortune solely to the same crime, which his very countenance seemed to call to mind, was fortunately absent from court, and survived the funeral but a few days.

This was the conduct of Paul in the first days of his reign; and I have collected the whole of it together, lest these instances of reason, justice, and feeling, should be lost and forgotten in the heap of unaccountable actions with which they were afterwards obscured, and which I shall now proceed to relate.

The guards, that dangerous body of men, who had overturned the throne of the father, and who had long considered the accession of the son as the term of their

their military existence, were rendered incapable of injuring him by a bold and vigorous step, and treated without the least management from the first day. Paul incorporated in the different regiments of guards his battalions that arrived from Gathina*, the officers of which he distributed among the various companies, promoting them at the same time two or three steps; so that simple lieutenants or captains in the army found themselves at once captains in the guards, a place so important, and hitherto so honored, and which gives the rank of colonel, or even of brigadier. Some

* Paul expected these battalions with evident impatience and anxiety. They marched all night, and arrived in the morning. Ratikof, a subaltern, who had no other merit than the good fortune of announcing to him their wished-for arrival, was instantly created a knight of St. Anne, and made *aide-de-camp* to the grand-duke. It was not till Paul saw himself surrounded with his little army, that he began to act as he had done at Gathina.

of

of those ancient captains, of the first families in the kingdom, found themselves under the command of officers of no birth, who but a few years before had left their companies as serjeants or corporals, to enter into the battalions of the grand-duke. This bold and hasty change, which at any other time would have been fatal to its author, had only the effect of inducing a few hundreds of officers, subalterns and others, to retire. Most of these were such as had sufficient to live upon beside their commissions, or could neither digest the putting others over their heads, nor support the harassing discipline which the intruders were about to establish*. Many of

* Of these obtruded officers, no one made his fortune so rapidly as Araktscheief. Seven years before, the grand-duke, wishing to have a company of artillery at Pavlofsky, asked general Melissino for an officer capable of forming one. Araktscheief, who had been brought up in the corps of cadets, and who had
gotten

of these young officers, however, felt no other affront than that of being obliged to

gotten himself noticed by the progress he made, and particularly for the ardour and passionate zeal he displayed for the minutæ of discipline, was named. In spite of his indefatigable attentions, severity, and exactness in the service, it was some time before he could establish himself thoroughly in the good opinion of Paul. Several pretty fireworks, which he composed with the assistance of his old master for the entertainment at Pavlovsky, but, above all, the rage for exercising with which he burned, and which induced him to harass the soldiers day and night, at length gained him the favor of the grand-duke. At his accession to the throne, Araktscheief was created a major in the guards, with the rank of general, and appointed military governor of Petersburg. He received the military order of St. Anne, with some thousands of peasants, and became the emperor's right-hand. Araktscheief, with whom major M** has served in the corps of cadets, where he was serjeant, was truly commendable for the talents, acquirements, and zeal which he displayed at that time: but he possesses a disgusting degree of brutality, which he exercised even towards the cadets. Never was pindaric poet more imperiously tormented by his muse, than this man is possessed by his military demon. His fury and his cane have already cost more than one unfortunate soldier his life, even under the eye of Paul. He has revived a barbarity, which was no longer known in the Russian service: he abuses and strikes the

to quit their brilliant uniforms, and to alter their dress according to that of those

very officers when exercising. However, at the period of his favor, that he might have the appearance of being grateful, he recommended general Melissino, his former friend, with whom he was at variance. He has just been disgraced, but since recalled, and created a baron. It was he who reviewed the troops sent into Germany.

The history of another of these officers deserves to be mentioned for its singularity. It will prove how a man sometimes makes his way in the world.

One of the friends of major M**, taking a walk on the quay, met with a youth of sixteen, who appeared to have lately landed, and who walked in despair along the water-side, as if meditating to throw himself in. He went up, and spoke to him. The young stranger said, that he was a Frenchman by descent, but born in Russia; that the grand-duke had been his god-father; that his father had sent him in his infancy to France, to be educated in a seminary there, from which he had eloped, to return to Russia, where he could learn no news of his father; that he was without money, without acquaintances, and did not know what to do, unless he made away with himself. The major's friend endeavoured to console him, took him to his own house, and made some inquiries. He learned that his father, baron Bilistein, had in fact been

those battalions which had so long excited their ridicule.

Paul,

been preceptor to the grand-duke, but that he had since married in Moldavia, where he died. Major M** and his friends exerted themselves to get the young man admitted into the guards as a subaltern officer. In the Swedish war, he went with his regiment, and was made prisoner at the defeat of the Russian galleys. A year after he came back in a more deplorable condition than ever; and, to add to his misfortunes, the major's friend and his other patrons being no longer at Petersburg, he had no resource but major M**, to whom he came every day to relate his misfortunes. One morning he found him reading the life of Jame-rai-Duval, and his correspondence with Miss Sacalof, afterwards the wife of admiral Ribas. M** knew that this lady was a friend of Miss Nelidof, the mistress of the grand-duke, which suggested to him the following step. He dictated to Bilistein a letter to Madame Ribas, in which he told her, that the accidentally reading one of her charming letters to Duval had suspended his despair, because he conceived that a lady, who could paint the sentiments of benevolence and humanity so well, must possess them in her heart: in consequence, he laid before her his sad situation, and solicited her influence to be recommended to the grand-duke. Madame Ribas sent for him, and recommended him to Miss Nelidof, who presented him to the grand-duke. A

Paul, alarmed and enraged at this general desertion, went to the barracks, flattered the foldiers, appeased the officers, and endeavoured to retain them, by excluding from all employ, civil and military, those who should retire in future, and who besides were no longer to wear their uniform. He afterwards issued an order, that every officer or subaltern who had resigned, or should give in his resignation, should quit the capital within four-and-twenty hours, and return to his own home. It did not enter into the head of the person who drew up the ukase, that it contained an absurdity; for several of the officers were natives of

few hundred rubles were given him to equip himself, and through the means of count Soltikof he obtained a lieutenant's commission in the battalions at Pavlofsky. From that time he lived less wretched, and always appeared extremely grateful. At the accession of the grand-duke he was made a lieutenant-colonel in the guards.

Peter-

Petersburg, and had families residing in the city. Accordingly some of them retired to their homes without quitting the capital, not obeying the first part of the order, lest they should be found guilty of disobedience to the second. Arkarof, who was to see it put in force, having informed the emperor of this contradiction, he directed that the injunction to quit Petersburg should alone be obeyed. A number of young men were consequently taken out of their houses as criminals, put out of the city, with orders not to re-enter it, and left in the road without shelter, and without any furred garments, in very severe weather. They who belonged to very remote provinces, for the most part wanting money to carry them thither, wandered about the neighbourhood of Petersburg, where several perished with cold and want.

These measures were extended to all the officers of the army; and those on the staff as generals were equally obliged to join their regiments, or resign, because these staffs were abolished. By this impolitic step he pretended to commence a reform, and gain the army. But what soon shewed that Paul, in becoming emperor, by no means renounced the military trifles which had alone occupied his time as grand-duke, was his devoting all his attention, from the morning of his ascending the throne, to the frivolous changes which he wished to introduce into the dress and exercise of the soldiers. For a moment the palace had the appearance of a place taken by assault by foreign troops; those who began to mount guard there differing so much in dress and style from those who had been seen there the day before. He went down into the court, where he was manœuvring his soldiers

three

three or four hours, to teach them to mount guard after his fashion, and establish his *wacht parade* (guard-parade), which became the most important institution and central point of his government. Every day since he has dedicated the same time to it, however cold it might be. There, in a plain deep green uniform, great boots, and a large hat, he spends his mornings in exercising his guards: there he gives his orders, receives reports, publishes his favors, rewards, and punishments; and there every officer must be presented to him, surrounded by his sons and *aides-de-camp*, stamping his heels on the pavement to keep himself warm, his bald head bare, his nose cocked up, one hand behind his back, and with the other raising and falling his cane in due time, and crying, *raz, dva; raz, dva; one, two; one, two;* he prides himself in braving a cold of fifteen or twenty degrees of Reaumur without

without furs. After this, none of the officers dared any longer appear in pelisses; and the old generals, tormented with coughs, gout, and rheumatism, were obliged to form a circle round Paul, dressed like himself*.

After the first impressions which his accession caused in the heart of Paul, punishments and disgraces succeeded with the same rapidity and profusion with

* A Hogarth, who should see the emperor and his younger son busy about a poor recruit, turning him to the right and to the left, marching him forward and backward, raising up his chin, tightening his belt, and placing his head properly, with every now and then a blow, would have a fine subject for a caricature. An emigrant of the name of Lami conceived the humorous idea of dedicating to Paul a bad translation he made of the explanation of Hogarth's prints. I know not whether he did it out of simplicity, or as a stroke of satire; but the name of Paul is very happily placed at the head of that work, which wanted only the ridicule of such a dedication to make it complete. Paul, however, suspected no joke in it, for he sent abbe Lami a present of a snuff-box.

which

which he had lavished his favors. Several experienced the two extremes in a few days. It is true, that most of these punishments at first appeared just : but then it must be allowed, that Paul could scarcely strike any but the guilty, so corrupt had been all who were about the throne.

Notwithstanding the assurances he had given Zubof, one of the first orders that followed was, to seal up his office and that of Markof, and to turn their officers and secretaries out of court with disgrace. One Terfky, master of requests, and reporter to the senate, who publicly sold justice to the highest bidder, was at first gratified with an order of knighthood, and obtained some lands, which he said the late empress had promised him a few days before her decease; next morning he was dismissed from his offices. This respect of Paul
to

to the pretended will of his mother, and his care to enrich a rascal before discarding him, were strangely admired. Surely he ought rather to have brought to trial this despoiler of the widow and orphan, and made him an example, to satisfy public justice!

Samoïlof, the attorney-general, whom likewise he had honorably confirmed in his office, with a present of four thousand peasants, amounting in value to more than twenty thousand rubles (20000*l.*) a year, was displaced a few days after, put under arrest, and his secretary was sent to the fortress. Thus was everything reformed, except Besborodko, Nicholas Soltikof, and Arkarof*.

This wavering and uncertain conduct, which characterised the first steps of

* See the next chapter.

Paul,

Paul, clearly proves that his favors were the effects of policy; and the disgraces that followed them were to be ascribed to passion rather than to justice. But what confounded all who had admired him, was to see him, at the moment when he entered such an intricate labyrinth of business and abuses, the importance of which to the state should have occupied him at least some days, applying the very morning of his accession with the same eagerness to the most trifling details of military service. The shape of a hat, the color of a feather, the altitude of a grenadier's cap, boots, spatterdashies, cockades, queues, and sword-belts, became the affairs of state that absorbed his astonishing activity. He was surrounded by patterns of accoutrements and uniforms of all kinds. The greatest proof of zeal and merit any one could give him during the first days of his reign, was to appear before him

him in the new uniform he had introduced. An officer, who could give his tailor a hundred rubles to have a dress of the new fashion made in a few hours, and appear in it the next morning in the *wacht-parade*, was almost certain of obtaining some post, or at least a cross. Several had no other merit, and employed no other means to gain the good graces of their new emperor*.

Another whim, which caused no little surprise, was the imperial prohibition of wearing round hats, or rather the sudden order of taking them away, or tearing them to pieces on the heads of those

* General Meyendorf being mentioned to him as a good officer of horse, he dispatched a courier to him; and Meyendorf, in his eagerness to obey the command, presented himself at the parade in his ancient uniform. Paul, enraged, uttered some severe reproaches to those who had recommended such a man, called him one of *Potemkin's soldiers*, and banished him to his estate.

who

who appeared in them. This occasioned some disgraceful scenes in the streets, and particularly near the palace. The cossacks and soldiers of the police fell on the passengers to uncover their heads, and beat those who, not knowing the reason, attempted to defend themselves. An English merchant, going through the street in a sledge, was thus stopped, and his hat snatched off. Supposing it to be a robbery, he leaped out of his sledge, knocked down the soldier, and called the guard. Instead of the guard, arrived an officer, who overpowered, and bound him; but as they were carrying him before the police, he was fortunate enough to meet the coach of the English minister, who was going to court, and claimed his protection*. Sir

* Another Englishman was met by an officer of the police, who took from him his round hat. The Englishman, folding his arms, and surveying him from head to foot, said with a look of compassion, "Ah, friend! how I pity thee for being a Russian!"

Charles

Charles Whitworth made his complaint to the emperor; who, conjecturing that a round hat might be the national dress of the English, as it is of the Swedes *, said, that his order had been misconceived, and he would explain himself more fully to Arkarof. The next day it was published in the streets and houses, that strangers, who were not in the emperor's service, or naturalized, were not comprised in the prohibition. Round hats were now no longer pulled off: but they who were met with this unlucky head-dress were conducted to the police to ascertain their country. If they were found to be Russians, they were sent for soldiers; and woe to a

* It is likewise the national hat of the Russians, a little difference in the crown excepted, which it was well to be apprised of, as it prevented the wearer from insult. The hatters' shops being soon emptied of cocked hats, they who had neither time nor means to procure one, cocked up their little round hats with pins, that they might walk the streets with safety.

French-

Frenchman, who had been met with in this dress, for he would have been condemned as a jacobin*. It was reported to Paul, that the *chargé d'affaires* of the king of Sardinia, indulging himself in raillery at this singular proscription of round hats, said, that such trifles had often been on the point of occasioning seditions in Italy. The *chargé d'affaires* received orders, through Arkarof, to quit the city in twenty-four hours. Thanks to the distance and situation of the king of Sardinia, he could not demand an explanation of such an insult, otherwise round hats might have become the motive of a war between two monarchs†.

A regu-

* Perhaps the reader may suppose that these round hats were considered as some party sign. By no means: it was a singular aversion which Paul had for them; and he had declared war against them at Pavlofsky four years before.

† It was fortunate that it did not happen to the Swedish or Prussian ambassador. The latter, however, fell

A regulation equally incomprehensible was the sudden prohibition of harnessing horses after the Russian mode. A fortnight was allowed for procuring harness in the German fashion; after the expiration of which, the police was enjoined to cut the traces of every carriage, the horses of which were harnessed in the ancient manner. Almost as soon as it was made public, several persons dared not venture abroad, still less appear in their carriages near the palace, for fear of being insulted. The sadlers, availing themselves of the occasion, asked as far as three hundred rubles (30*l*.) for a plain

fell into disgrace with Paul for a motive equally noble. He gives out that the hat, the tail, the bag, the spatter-dashes, and the sword behind the back, are in the Prussian mode. M. van Tauenziehn appeared to protest against the fidelity of the translation, by coming to court in a more modern and more elegant uniform. This was the crime for which Paul demanded his recal.

harness for a pair of horses. To dress the *ischvoschtschiki*, or Russian coachmen, in the German fashion, was attended with another inconvenience. Most of them would neither part with their long beards, their *kaftans*, nor their round hats; still less would they tie a false tail to their short hair, which produced the most ridiculous scenes and figures in the world. At length the emperor had the vexation to be obliged to change his rigorous order into a simple invitation to his subjects gradually to adopt the German fashion of dress, if they wished to merit his favor.

Another reform with respect to carriages: the great number of splendid equipages that swarmed in the streets of Petersburg, disappeared in an instant. The officers, even the generals, came to the parade on foot, or in little sledges, which

which also was not without its dangers*.

It was anciently a point of etiquette for every person who met a Russian autocrate, his wife, or son, to stop his horse or coach, alight, and prostrate himself in the snow, or in the mud†. This barbarous homage, difficult to be paid in a large city, where carriages pass in great numbers, and always on the gallop, had been completely abolished under the reign of the polished Catharine. One of the first cares of Paul was to re-establish it in

* An officer, walking the streets in a large pelisse, had given his servant his sword, which incommoded him, intending to put it on again, and to take off his pelisse, when he got near the palace. Unfortunately, before this took place, the emperor met him, and in consequence he was reduced to the ranks, and his servant made an officer in his place.

† Peter I. ordered those who prostrated themselves before him in this manner to be caned, and even caned them himself.

all

all its rigour. A general officer, who passed on without his coachman's observing the emperor riding by on horseback, was stopped, and immediately put under arrest*. The same unpleasant circumstance occurred to several others, so that nothing was so much dreaded, either on foot or in a carriage, as the meeting of the emperor. Instances have even happened where the fault and its punishment have been attended with consequences so serious, as must induce a benevolent monarch to abolish so troublesome an etiquette.

The ceremony established within the palace became equally strict, and equally

* When his sword was returned him, he refused to take it, saying, that it was a gold-hilted sword received from the empress, with the privilege of its never being taken from him. Paul sent for him, returned the sword to him himself, and said, that he had resolved to make an example, and had no particular ill-will towards him: at the same time he ordered him to repair immediately to the army.

dreaded. Woe betide him, who, when permitted to kiss the hand of Paul, did not make the floor resound by striking it with his knee as loud as a soldier with the butt-end of his firelock. It was requisite too, that the salute of the lips on his hand should be heard, to certify the reality of the kiss, as well as of the genuflexion. Prince George Gallitzin, the chamberlain, was put under arrest on the spot by his Muscovitish majesty himself, for having made the bow and kissed the hand too negligently*.

Another

* Paul, when grand-duke, had a great predilection for etiquette. Being once at Montbelliard, he suddenly took by the arm a young officer of his suit, who was playing at cards, and turning him out of the room, he said to those who were playing with the officer, "Gentlemen, that young coxcomb is not of a proper rank to make one of your party." At the court balls, the dancers were obliged to twist themselves every possible way, that they might not turn their backs upon him when dancing, wherever he might happen to be. Paul will allow none to turn their
backs

Another of Paul's first regulations, was a strict injunction to all tradesmen to efface from the front of their shops the French word *magazin*, and substitute the Russian word *lavka* (shop); assigning as a reason, that the emperor alone could have magazines of wood, flour, corn, &c.; while a tradesman ought not to be above his condition, but to stick to his shop.

To report all the ordinances of similar weight and importance that succeeded each other in the course of one week, I must descend into particulars too tedious*.

What

backs but his enemies. Whether they will avail themselves of the permission, if he should give them an opportunity, I will not pretend to say.

* He has since issued different ukases, prohibiting the wearing of frock coats, waistcoats without sleeves, and pantaloons. He has forbidden the academy to use the word *revolution* when speaking of the course of the stars; and has enjoined the players to employ

What can be said, what can be hoped, of a man, who, succeeding Catharine, could consider the regulating such things as the most urgent? Frequently these new and important regulations contradicted or frustrated one another, and what was ordained one day was often obliged to be modified or annulled the next. In a word, we may say that Paul, when he wrapped himself in the imperial mantle, let the grand-duke peep out; that he thought to govern a vast empire as he had governed his Pavlofsky; his capital, like his house; and thirty millions of men of all ranks and all nations, like a score of lackeys.

Of all the unforeseen changes which he introduced without any preparation, those which he made in the army were

the word *permission* instead of *liberty*, which they had been accustomed to put in their bills. He has forbidden the manufacturers to fabricate any tri-coloured ribands or stuffs whatever.

the

the most extensive, and the most impolitic. Unquestionably there was room for great reforms and great amendments in the military department. To improve the condition of the brave Russian soldier; to settle that of the officer, which was still more wretched; gradually to diminish the number of supernumeraries; to restore order and discipline, which the reign of so many women and so many favorites had destroyed; opened a fine field to the military genius of Paul. All he was capable of doing was to multiply irregular promotions, increase a staff already too numerous, and alter uniforms, ranks, terms, and titles. The Russian army offered a pattern to be followed, in the beauty, simplicity, and convenience of its dress, equally adapted to the climate, and to the genius of the country*. A large *charvari*,
or

* Accordingly the soldier imagined himself much superior to his neighbours, and not without reason,
Paul

or pair of pantaloons of red cloth, the ends of which terminated in boots of pliable leather, and which was fastened by a girdle over a red and green jacket; a little helmet well adapted to a soldier, with the hair cut short in the neck, but long enough to cover the ears, and easily kept in order; constituted the whole of the military uniform. The soldier was dressed in the twinkling of an eye, for he had but two garments; and their size was such, as allowed him to defend himself from the cold by additions underneath, without infringing upon the uniformity of his external appearance. This neat and warlike equipage is now changed for the ancient dress of Ger-

Paul deprived him of this national pride, by compelling him servilely to imitate the Germans of the last century, whom the Russians imagined they had far outstripped. Paul has acted like a pedant, who should turn a scholar back to his *a, b, c*, for having presumed to learn to read too rapidly.

many,

many, which the Russian foldier abominates: his fair locks, which he loved to wash every morning, he must now be daub with greafe and flour; and he must spend an hour in buttoning his black spatterdashies, which he curses for pinching his legs. He murmurs aloud: it is probable, that the false tail which he is forced to suspend from his poll, will occasion as many desertions as the catagans of St. Germain*. That old original, marshal Suvarof, when he received orders to establish these novelties, with little sticks for models for the foldiers tails and side-curls, said, "Hair-powder is not gunpowder; curls are not can-

* Before the reign of Paul; desertion was almost unknown to the Russians: now they desert in parties, and repair to Prussia, where whole regiments are formed of them. I asked some of them, why they deserted. "Why, Sir," said they, "we are forced to be at our exercise from morning till night without having anything to eat; our dress has been taken from us, and we are beaten black and blue."

“nons; and tails are not bayonets.” This sarcasm, which is not destitute of wit, and forms in the Russian language a sort of apophthegm in rhyme, soon spread from mouth to mouth through the army, and was the true reason that induced Paul to recal Suvarof, and dismiss him from the service. This old warrior was the idol of the Russian soldiery.

It was the same with the changes which he made in civil affairs. His wish was to alter, not to improve. For anything to have subsisted under the reign of his mother, was a sufficient reason why it should cease under him. All the tribunals, all the governments of the empire, have been fresh modelled, and their seats have been changed. That which had been consecrated by its name (*Ekaterinoslaf*) to the glory of Catharine, was abolished, and this public affront

front to the memory of his mother is not less so to the heart of Paul*. The reader

* There is nothing so trifling to which this *microphilist* does not descend, to shew disrespect to his mother's memory. The persons belonging to her wore rings, on which the date of her decease was enamelled. The emperor expressed his dissatisfaction at it; and they are obliged to wear rings with the motto of, *Paul consoles me.*

He carried his want of filial regard so far, as to check, by his disapprobation, a society of opulent Russians, who had united at Hamburg under the auspices of the Russian minister, to erect a poetical monument to the memory of Catharine. The situation in which major M** stood at that time, and particularly what he owed to two of his friends, induced him to exert his talents on the occasion. The judges of the Lyceum at Hamburg had the courage to adjudge the second prize to the piece he sent, notwithstanding the proscribed sentiments that beamed through the manner in which he spoke of Catharine, and his silence respecting the comforter she left behind, or his allusions to him (1). The

(1) The motto of the piece was, *Fuit illa et ingens gloria Rufforum*; and in it were the following verses:

Mais j'entends retentir une voix gemissante;
Je vois l'Humanité plaintive et menaçante:

Barbares!

reader may judge of the confusion, injustice, wretchedness, and ruin, that
such

The secretary of the embassy, when he announced to him the success of his piece, informed him, that they were going to send it to the emperor, and pay his majesty the compliment of this monument, which would be magnificent, and cost vast sums of money. At the same time he requested him to write an ode in honor of Paul, to be placed at the head of the pieces that had been approved. M** positively refused this new tribute, which would have been a piece of meanness in him, as he had just been torn from his family, and unjustly proscribed by the emperor. Not receiving

Barbares ! arrêtez : en ! pour qui cet autel ?

Voyez ces combattans, ces fers, ces feux, ces armes ;

Ah ! mon sang et mes larmes

Vont éteindre à vos yeux cet encens criminel !

“ But hark, a voice that wildly groans and shrieks !

“ Humanity bewailing, threat’ning speaks :

“ ‘ Barbarians, halt ! for whom those blood-stain’d fanes ?

“ ‘ Behold yon combatants, yon arms and chains !

“ ‘ My blood, my tears, e’en now shall quench the fire,

“ ‘ And save each hero from the funeral pyre.”

Likewise

L’aigle puissant du nord, frappé dans sa carrière,

Se rabat sur la terre :

Il erre dans la nuit ; son astre s’est éteint.

“ Behold the threat’ning eagle of the north,

“ That soar’d exulting in resistless pow’r,

“ Struck in his mid career, descends to earth,

“ Wandering in night. His sun shall rise no more.’

such changes of places must produce in Russia: more than twenty thousand gentlemen were thrown out of employ.

If this new reign has been fatal to the army and to the poor gentry, it has hitherto appeared still more so to the unhappy peasantry, whose chains it endeavours to rivet. If Paul were desirous of taking an example from Prussia,

ing the medal, however, which had been adjudged to him, he sent to the secretary to demand it, saying, he would otherwise make a public appeal in the newspapers against such an unworthy proceeding. He knew that his piece had spread through the court at Petersburg, where his name had been discovered, though he had taken the precaution to disguise it in an *anagram*; and this contributed not a little to bring Paul's anathema upon the society at Hamburg. The threat of such a public affront had its effect, and the medal was at length sent, with some excuses for the delay of more than a year, and a confession that the emperor, having disapproved of this monument to his mother, the illustrious society was afraid of his indignation. Major M** himself communicated to me these particulars, as well as the letters of the secretary.

assuredly

assuredly it should have been that of its treatment of the Poles, whom perfidy had subjected to its dominion*. It would
not

* Let the reader compare the ukase of Paul, which enjoins all his subjects to prostrate themselves at his sight, with the order which the young king of Prussia has just given to his ministers, on his return from Poland, where it was with indignation he found a people debased almost to as low a degree as the Russians. The following is a translation of some fragments of this memorable order, as it appears in the *Jahrbücher der Preussischen Monarchie*, “Annals of the Prussian Monarchy,” for January 1799:

“ My dear ministers of state von Voss and von
“ Schroeter: During the tour I have lately made in
“ the new provinces of Prussia, I have seen that the
“ lowest class of my subjects in those countries is in a
“ state of civilisation far beneath that of the other pro-
“ vinces. These miserable beings are degradingly dis-
“ tinguished by the dirtiness of their houses and clothes,
“ but still more by their cringing manners, and a hu-
“ mility beyond bounds—In my eyes, and in those
“ of the law, the lowest of my subjects possesses the
“ dignity of a man. The people of these new pro-
“ vinces are still ignorant of this dignity, for which they
“ are indebted to the Prussian sceptre, because the in-
“ ferior officers of government are ignorant of their
“ duty,

not be too much to say, that the Prussian government gives the Polish vassals more freedom than Kosciuszko could have bestowed on them, had he been victorious. The king of Prussia, far from imitating Catharine or Paul, who distributes these slaves among his courtiers, thus exposing them to more insupportable private tyranny, has annexed them to his domains, and they experience an infinitely milder lot than formerly*.

A report

“ duty, and abuse their authority. It is a proverbial
 “ saying among them, that the Polanders must be go-
 “ verned by the whip; and I have several times heard
 “ complaints of such treatment being exercised towards
 “ my subjects, while changing horses,” &c.

This is the manner in which a king expresses himself who, feeling as a man, revolted at the sight of a nation of slaves prostrating themselves at his feet. He enjoins his ministers to raise up this degraded nation, by instructing it, civilising it, and punishing abuses of power.

* All those princes who have wished to raise the people and depress the great, the better to establish the authority

A report being spread, that Paul was about to restrict the power of masters over their slaves, and give the peasants of the lords the same advantages as those of the crown, the people of the capital were much pleased with the hopes of this change. At that juncture an officer set off for his regiment, which lay at Oremberg. On the road he was asked about the new emperor, and what new regulations he was making. He related what he had seen, and what he had heard; among the rest, mentioning the ukase which was soon to appear in favor of the peasants. At this news, those of Tver

authority of government, have endeavoured to annex all seignorial rights and estates to their own domains. The Russian autocrats take the opposite course: they distribute the remains of the crown among the nobility, to render them more zealous supporters of a government more severe than ever was that of the feudal system. By this ill-judged policy they render themselves incapable of restoring liberty to their slaves at a future period.

and

and Novgorod indulged in some tumultuous actions, which were considered as symptoms of rebellion. Their masters were violently enraged with them; and the cause that had led them into error was discovered. Marshal Repnin was immediately dispatched at the head of some troops against the insurgents; and the officer, who had unwittingly given rise to this false hope, by retailing the news of the city on his road, was soon brought back in confinement. The senate of Petersburg judged him deserving of death, and condemned him to be broken, to undergo the punishment of the knout, and, if he survived this, to labour in the mines. The emperor confirmed this sentence. This is the first criminal trial that was laid before the public; and assuredly it justifies but too well those remains of shame which have hitherto kept secret similar outrages. These circumstances might

might no doubt have taken place under the reign of Catharine, yet would they have been accompanied with that silence and mystery in which guilt envelopes itself. But let us quit this subject for the less ungrateful one of the eccentricities of the emperor Paul.

The most prominent of these is that mania which, from his infancy, he displayed for the military dress and exercise, and which has ever since been increasing. This passion in a prince no more indicates the general or the hero than fondness for dressing and undressing her doll forebodes the good mother in a girl, who passes her days in this amusement. Frederic the Great, the most accomplished soldier of his time, is well known to have had from his infancy the most insuperable repugnance to all those minutiae of a corporal to which his father

ther

ther would have subjected him: this was even the first source of that disagreement which ever subsisted between the father and son. It was only by stealth that the young Frederic could indulge himself in studying history and literature with his preceptor du Han. Frederic William considered every book, except the Psalms of David and his military regulations, as useless or dangerous; and when he saw the young Frederic, not confining himself to the guard's march, but wishing to exchange his little drum for a harpsichord, and his fife for a German flute, he forbid him music. This paternal tyranny had the opposite effect to what his father wished: it gave more energy to Frederic's repressed desires. He acquired information; he became a hero: his father was never anything more than a corporal*.

* I know some young Russians, whose genius the same causes have only served to display: thus a good bow springs from under the hand that bends it.

Peter III. pushed his foldato-mania to a ridiculous point, fancying he made Frederic his model. He loved soldiers and arms, as a man loves horses and dogs. He knew nothing but how to exercise a regiment, and never went abroad but in a captain's uniform. This Peter III. at the head of a regiment so well drilled by himself, had not the courage to face a young female, who marched to meet him with a few companies of the very same guards who were totally ignorant of the Prussian exercise. He lost both his crown and his life, without daring to defend them. Certainly a more local, strong, and recent example cannot be adduced against this mania, which seems rather to exclude courage and military talents than to be a sign of them. It is very easy to wear a coarse surtout buttoned over the belly, a greasy hat*, and

* Paul affects to wear a dirty hat: but where lies the merit of this? Since he will have every one do his duty,

and a sword behind the back: a man may even spend the day on the parade, caning the soldiers and abusing the officers:—but this would be a satirical caricature of a great king; it would be to represent him as a recruiting officer, affecting to give himself airs. But, says Molière:

Quand sur une personne on prétend se régler,
C'est par les beaux côtés qu'il lui faut ressembler:
Et ce n'est pas du tout la prendre pour modèle
..... que de tousser et de cracher comme elle.

“ When Admiration bids us mimic others,
“ We in their virtues should the semblance hit,
“ Nor will the sage and fool e'er pass for brothers,
“ Because forsooth alike they cough or spit.”

There is one part of this great king's conduct of much more utility, and almost as easy to imitate, since it requires neither talents nor genius, but merely good will, patience, and a love of jus-

duty, why does he not make his *valets-de-chambre* do theirs, in beating and brushing his old beaver?

tice; this is for a sovereign to receive, like him, the petitions and letters of his subjects, but particularly to answer them. The perseverance and exactness with which he always adhered to this resolution, which he adopted at the beginning of his reign, cannot be too much admired. Whether he granted or refused, whether he found the petition reasonable or unreasonable, he answered every man who addressed him. I have seen several of those answers, admirable for their precision and sagacity; yet Frederic found time to do and write other things beside answering letters. He did not rise earlier than Paul; but he staid only a quarter of an hour on the parade, and often did not go to it at all.

Nothing could be more worthy of a Russian autocrate than to establish a similar communication between himself and his subjects, since arbitrary acts and public

lic violences are nowhere so frequent or so disastrous. Hitherto, every man who had the audacity to present a request immediately to the sovereign, even under the reign of Catharine, was imprisoned. Paul appeared to have abolished this atrocious law from the day of his accession, and took some papers that were offered him. He even ordered a sort of office to be constructed on the stairs of the palace, into which any one might put letters; and gave public notice, that he would read them all, make the necessary examinations, and then answer them. In consequence, he forbid any one to disturb him in future on the *wacht-parade*, and ordered those to be arrested who should after that approach him with a paper in their hand. The box of the letter-office, however, soon filled; and Paul, contrary to his expectation, finding more petitions than informers, became tired of doing them justice, and frightened

frightened at their number. He did not reflect that they would necessarily diminish, if he would employ more readiness and method in answering them*. Things returned to their former chaotic state; and the secretaries directed to examine these pieces are, as before, arbiters of the fate of those unfortunate persons who appealed to their master.

The finances of the empire, exhausted by the prodigalities, and still more by the waste of Catharine's reign, required a prompt remedy; and to this Paul seemed at first to turn his thoughts. Partly from hope, partly from fear, the paper money of the crown rose a little in value. It was to be supposed, that the grand-

* Paul has sometimes given orders respecting the letters he has received, but he does not answer them. I myself have drawn up a few very brief, clear, and just requests, for some oppressed persons, which remained unanswered. He now causes his refusals to the petitions he receives to be printed in the Petersburg gazettes.

duke

duke of all the Russias, who for thirty years had been obliged to live on an income of a hundred thousand rubles (10,000 $\text{\textit{r.}}$) per annum, would at least have learned economy per force; but he was soon seen to heap wealth upon some, and lavish favors upon others, with as much profusion as his mother, and with still less discernment. The spoils of Poland continued to add to the riches of men already too wealthy*. A man must be acquainted with the inexhaustible sources from which a Russian autocrat can

* I am informed that the emperor, on his coronation, among other gratuities, distributed eighty-two thousand *souls* among a score of people; that is to say, in the language of metals, that he has made presents of tracts of land inhabited and cultivated by eighty-two thousand male slaves; for in Russia a woman is not a soul yet. By these donations the emperor cedes the private rights which he claims over these wretched beings, and the lands they are obliged to cultivate, reserving to himself only the sovereignty. Now if we suppose the *slave-soul*, or peasant, to bring the *body*, or gentleman who possesses it, only seven rubles clear

can draw his means, not to be struck at the immense gifts he bestowed on his courtiers, and at the same time disgusted at the little he has dedicated to the public, to justice, to merited rewards and true beneficence*.

The suddenness with which Paul seized the reins of government, and the terror clear per annum, which is a very moderate computation, it follows that the emperor has given away so much of the domains of the crown as would produce a neat income of five hundred and seventy-four thousand rubles (57,400*l.*) which, considering the nature of the property, is a capital beyond estimation. Catharine, by her profusion in this way, had nearly disposed of all her domains; but the confiscated estates and starosties in Poland constitute the fund to which the present emperor has recourse. It need not be mentioned, that a population of eighty-two thousand males in Russia or Poland must occupy an immense district.

* All that Paul's talents have enabled him to do for the restoration of a sort of equilibrium between his receipts and disbursements, is reduced at last to an exorbitant tax, which he has just laid on all the classes of his slaves. The poll-tax of the wretched vassals has been doubled, and a new tax has been imposed upon the nobles, which however the vassals must ultimately pay.

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inspired by his known rigor and activity, at first set at fault the dark intrigues of knaves and villains, who had turned the treasures of the state to their own profit. The prevention of the scandalous dilapidations of these treasures would double the amount; and it is to be presumed, that, everything being renewed, the robbers will be obliged to suspend their operations for a time; but, when once they are acquainted with the emperor's course, they will regulate their own accordingly; they will dig other mines, and excavate new drains; pillage and prevarication will revive, and be reduced to a system, as before. Theft is a vice inherent in the Russian government, and springs from the character of the nation, in which manners, probity, and public spirit are wanting*.

* The French author confesses, that while he was writing this, he scarcely expected to find the same infamous conduct triumphing under a *republican form* of government, and in a *regenerated* nation.

It must be confessed that, morally speaking, the people about Paul are better than those that were about his mother, and that he will be more culpable than she if he allow the same disorders to prevail. It is true that Catharine pretended to guide, and that Paul, on the contrary, will suffer himself to be led; he would feel himself humbled, however, in following the advice of a man who wished to appear better informed than himself. The person who has more immediate influence on his actions than his ministers, or even his mistress will ever have, is a *valet-de-chambre*, by birth a Turk, made a slave in his infancy, and brought up in his house. To this Turk, named Ivan Pavlovitch, the generals and great men are eager to pay their court, as the real fountain of Paul's private favor. Love is the strongest and most excusable of passions: its excesses and abuses, therefore, appear less odious, and the reign of favorites, or of mistresses,

mistresses, will never be so humiliating as that of valets. Beside their bad education, which gives rise to a just prejudice against them, the influence a prince allows them has always something mean and repulsive, and favors strongly of the water-closet*.

* This Ivan Pavlovitch is at present counsellor of state, and has the title of excellency. Many lackeys, *Hof*, or *Kammer-fouriers*, gentlemen of the bed-chamber, are every day rising to the highest posts. Thus extremes meet each other: the Muscovite licentiousness leads to that equality of rights which it considers with horror: but here it is a real calamity. A great Russian lord was accustomed to hold out his hand familiarly to every scullion or shoe-black that he met at court, styling them *bratt*, or *batioufchka*, brother or father. A gentleman expressing surprise at this familiarity, the lord said, "It is from policy, Sir: between this and to-morrow, these fellows may become my colleagues." Such is Russian equality: it is that of Tarquin cutting off the heads of his tallest poppies, or of a sultan creating his water-carrier prime visier.

ministers will never be so dominating as
that of Victor. Besides their bad educa-
tion, which gives rise to a just pretence
against them, the influence a prince al-
lows them has always furnished reason
and technique, and favors strongly of the
water-chest.

The Ivan Pavlovich is at present counsel-
or of state, and has the title of Excellency. Many
nobles, like the Russian nobles, are granted
the nobleship, are every day rising to the highest
posts. These exquisites meet each other the first
course of instruction leads to the acquisition of rights
which is combined with labor, but there is a real
element. A great Russian lord was accustomed to
hold out his hand annually to every Russian or Rus-
sian that he met at court, saying "What do you do?"
or "What are you doing?" A gentleman replying
"I am a noble of the Russian Empire," the lord said "I am a
"noble," he answered him and to-morrow, the fol-
"lowing day he became my colleague." Such is Russian
opportunity: one day of a Russian counts off the heads of
his nobles, or of a Russian counts off the heads of
his nobles.

The Russian nobles are not only the nobles of the
Russian Empire, but also the nobles of the Russian
Empire.

CHAP. V.

HAS PAUL REASON TO FEAR THE FATE
OF PETER III.?

Parallel between Paul and his father—

Portrait of the reigning empress—The grand-duke Alexander—The grand-duke Constantine—Zubof—N. Soltikof—Markof—Arkatoof—Repnin—Suvarof, and Valerian Zubof—Traits of the character of Paul, and his principal courtiers or ministers—His portrait—Anecdotes of his conduct when grand-duke.

PAUL, in his mode of life when grand-duke, and his conduct since his accession, so strongly resembles his father, that, changing names and dates, the history of the one might be taken
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for the history of the other. Both were educated in a perfect ignorance of business, and resided at a distance from court, where they were treated as prisoners of state rather than heirs to the crown; and whenever they presented themselves, appeared as aliens and strangers, having no concern with the royal family. The aunt of the father (Elizabeth) acted precisely as the mother of the son has done since. The endeavors of each were directed, to prolong their infancy and to perpetuate the feebleness of their minds. The young princes were both distinguished by personal vivacity and mental insensibility, by an activity which, untrained and neglected, degenerated into turbulence: the father was sunk in debauchery; the son, lost in the most insignificant trifles. An unconquerable aversion to study and reflection gave to both that infatuated taste for military parade, which would probably have displayed

played itself less forcibly in Paul had he been a witness of the ridicule they attached to Peter *. The education of Paul, however, was much more attended to

* A singular opposition may commonly be observed between father and son, if any striking feature exist in their characters. A well-disposed son will frequently possess that virtue which is directly opposite to his father's vice, particularly if he have seen its folly, or fallen its victim. I could adduce private instances particularly interesting to myself; but those of three or four successive kings of Prussia will make more impression on the public. Frederic I. was as remarkable for his politeness and magnificence as his son for his roughness and parsimony. The great king of Prussia avoided both extremes. The grandfather protected and honored the sciences ostentatiously; the son persecuted them, and endeavored to render them contemptible. The grandson cherished them, and cultivated them himself. The first was a royal courtier; the second, a royal corporal; the third, a royal hero. This contrast between father and son has not been observable for a long time in Russia, as one has not been the other's successor; but it is now about to appear in a very striking manner. Catharine and Paul are the two extremes, and the grand-duke Alexander promises fair to be at some future day the happy mean between both.

than than of his father. He was surrounded in infancy by persons of merit, and his youth promised a capacity of no ordinary kind*. It is even thought, that the singularities which he has since contracted are to be ascribed rather to the modes of life which he has in a manner been obliged to adopt, than to the natural faults of his disposition. It must also be allowed, that he is exempt from many of the vices which disgraced Peter: temperance and regularity of manners are prominent features of his character; features the more commendable, as they are rarely to be found in a Russian autocrat. To the same cause, education,

* Louis XIV. and Frederic the Great, loaded with favors and honors those who had superintended their education. The aged Epinus, Paul's tutor, is threatened with the fate of Seneca and Burrhus. That of colonel la Harpe and major Messon, who were tutors to his son, would be still less mild, should they fall again into the hands of Paul.

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and his knowledge of the language and character of the nation, is it owing that he differs from his father in other valuable qualities. If he has the wisdom to profit by these advantages, he will not fall into the same errors and misfortunes.

The similitude which, in some instances, has marked their conduct towards their wives, is still more striking; and in their amours, a singular coincidence of taste is observable. Catharine and Mary were the most beautiful women of the court, yet both failed to gain the affections of their husbands. Catharine had an ambitious soul, a cultivated mind, and the most amiable and polished manners. In a man, however, whose attachments were confined to soldiers, to the pleasures of the bottle, and the fumes of tobacco, she excited no other sentiment than disgust and aversion. He

was smitten with an object less respectable, and less difficult to please. The countess Vorontzof, fat, ugly in her person, and vulgar in her manners, was more suitable to his depraved military taste, and she became his mistress*.

In like manner, the regular beauty of Mary, the unalterable sweetness of her disposition, her unwearied complaisance, her docility as a wife, and her tenderness as a mother, have not been sufficient to prevent Paul from attaching himself to Miss Nelidof, whose disposition and qualities better accord with his own. She is ugly and diminutive; but seems desirous, by her wit and address, to compensate for the disadvantages of her person: for a woman

* She got drunk with him, and swore like a trooper: she squinted, and spat when she was talking.

to be in love with Paul, it is necessary she should resemble him*.

On their accession to the throne, neither the father nor the son were favorites either of the court or the nation, yet both acquired immediate popularity and favor. The first steps of Paul appeared to be directed, but improved, by those of Peter. The liberation of Kosciuszko and other prisoners brought to public recollection the recal of Biren, Munich, and Lestocq, with this difference, that Peter III. did not disgrace these acts of clemency and justice, by ridiculous violences, or by odious and groundless persecutions. Both issued ukases extremely favorable to the nobility, but

* He has lately proved fickle. Miss Nelidof, who lived on tolerable terms with the empress, is dismissed, and a young lady of the name of Lapukhin is the favorite.

from motives essentially different, and little to the honor of the son. The father granted to the Russian gentry those natural rights which every man ought to enjoy; while the object of the son was merely to revive those distinctions which in the present day are become obsolete and ridiculous in the eyes of many*. In the conduct which he has observed towards the clergy, Paul, however, has shewn himself a superior politician: instead of insulting the priests, and obliging them to shave their beards, he has bestowed the orders of the empire on the bishops, to put them on a

* Paul has now taken it into his head to create an heraldic nobility in Russia! Formerly this gothic institution was unknown there. The tzar Fedor even ordered the patents, of which some families would have availed themselves, to be burned. Have the Russians but now reached the twelfth century? They were the only nation in Europe, who, in their rapid progress to civilisation, bounded over this folly.

footing

footing with the nobility, and flattered the populace and the priesthood by founding churches, by pretended inspiration*.

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* A foldier in the guards having stood sentry at a door of the summer palace (an old wooden house in which Elizabeth resided), went to his captain, pretending he had a secret to communicate. He informed him, that while he was on duty, he saw a light in the uninhabited apartments of the palace, and presently some person knocked at the door at which he stood, and called him by name. He had the courage to look through the chinks in the door, and there beheld St. Michael. The saint ordered him to go to the emperor, and tell him that he must build him a church on that spot. In consequence, the foldier begged him to speak to the emperor, or he must take the liberty to do it himself, in obedience to his mission. The officer treated the visionary as a madman, and sent him about his business; he, however, mentioned the adventure to the major, who thought proper to relate it to Paul. The foldier was called, and ordered to repeat the account of his vision. The emperor told him, that St. Michael should be obeyed, for he had already been inspired with the design of building him a church, and had even the plan prepared. On this he sent for the model of a church, which he had ready in his closet. Does not this sound like a legend? yet this farce took place at the court of Russia in the month of December

1796,

In his military operations, however, his policy appears to have abandoned him, because here he gave the reins to his ruling passion. The quick and total change of discipline he has introduced in his armies has created him nearly as many enemies as there are officers and soldiers. The preference he gives to the old Germans in his service may prove as fatal to him as it did to his father. In the distrust and suspicions which incessantly haunt him, his inferiority to his father is also evident. One

1796, and the author was, in part, a witness to it. The palace is pulling down, and a church and a new palace are begun, dedicated to *monseigneur* Michael.—*Gosshodi pomiloï* (1)!—The miracle is unfolded, when it is known that a cousin of the soldier was one of Paul's valets-de-chambre; and that the soldier, by way of recompense, was promoted to the same post. We may expect soon to see him counsellor of state.

(1) The usual exclamation which the Russians make, crossing themselves at the same time, when they see anything extraordinary. It is one of the burdens of the litanies, "Lord have mercy!"

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of the first acts of Peter III. was to abolish the political inquisition established by Elizabeth; whereas Paul has prosecuted no scheme with greater alacrity than that of establishing a system of spies, and devising means for the encouragement of informers. The blind confidence of the father was his ruin, but it flowed from a humanity of disposition always respectable. The distrust of the son may not save him: it is the offspring of a timorous mind, which by its suspicions is more apt to provoke than to elude treason.

From the conformity of character observable, in so many particulars, in these two princes, we might be led to conclude that the catastrophe of one will be that of the other: but this seems at present not at all probable; for, striking as is the resemblance between Peter and Paul, the persons who compose their courts,

courts, and the circumstances of the times, are no less strikingly different.

In the first place, the character of Mary, as a wife, is wholly opposite to that of Catharine: sweetness of disposition is her chief characteristic. Her mildness, patience, and modesty, have been severely proved by the most rigorous and whimsical treatment; and, perhaps, by the persevering exercise of these qualities, she may in the end triumph. Her time is employed in a succession of duties and occupations suitable to her sex and her dignity. The education of her children, from whom she has too long been reluctantly separated, is at present a source of happiness to her. Her attention to her husband has enabled her to endure fatigues and exercises the least suitable to her sex and her character. How often has she been seen to attend him on horseback, at the wearisome reviews
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of Gatschina and Pavlofsky? Though exhausted with heat and fatigue, sometimes drenched with rain, or covered with snow, she has still, by her smiles, expressed her acquiescence*. She is, perhaps,

* He frequently posted the grand-duchess on a height, to serve as a mark or point of attack, to his troops, while he defended the approaches. One day, I remember, he placed her thus in the ruinous balcony of an old wooden mansion, round which he disposed his troops for defence. One party of troops he had given to major Lindener, with orders to make the attack according to his own plan. This plan was to establish the reputation of the major, and Paul prepared for the most able resistance. The princess, meanwhile, remained fixed on the tower, exposed to a heavy rain. Paul hastened to every point where he expected the enemy, and pranced about amid the rain as proudly as Charles XII. in a shower of musketballs. One hour passed after another; the rain redoubled its violence, and no enemy appeared. Paul, entertaining a high opinion of his Prussian, presumed that he had made a skilful march behind the wood, to surprise him more effectually. Accordingly he visited, changed and reinforced his advanced posts every moment, and sent out parties to reconnoitre and scour the country. Frequently a noble impatience getting the better of him or his horse, he galloped a considerable way to meet

perhaps, more careful of her time, and dedicates it to more useful purposes, than any lady in Russia. Music, painting, etching, embroidery, are the arts in which she excels, and which have alle-

meet the enemy, with whose tardiness he began to be dissatisfied. Presently his impatience was changed into rage and vexation. Lindener had taken the field early, and made a long round through the estate of Soltikof, to arrive at the village: but he had gotten his column entangled among the hedges and gardens, which threw it into confusion, and he knew not how to march out, while he had not room to form his line. The aides-de-camp, who came from Paul every moment to order him to make haste, completely confused his mind; and he could find no resource but to pretend he was seized with a violent colic, hasten home, and leave his troops to themselves. Paul, enraged at having made such an excellent disposition of his forces in vain, spurred on his horse as hard as he could gallop to the palace, there to digest his rage; leaving his wife, his army, and those whom he had invited to see this famous manœuvre, wet to the skin. They had waited from five in the morning till one in the afternoon; and much in this manner did Mary spend all her mornings, with one or two young ladies at most; one of whom too was Paul's favorite, and received all the attention of him and his courtiers.

viated

viated the solitude in which she lived. Reading and study are with her not so much a business as a recreation; and the management of domestic affairs, and the distribution of charities, serve happily to occupy her hours. Tall, well made, and still in the prime of life, she is rather handsome than pretty; she has more majesty than grace, and less wit than sentiment. She is a dutiful daughter and an affectionate sister, as well as a faithful wife and an excellent mother. Far from forgetting her country and her relations, the splendor which surrounds her, and the distance which separates them, serve but to increase the warmth of her affection and the vividness of her remembrance. Her numerous relations are always in her mind; her correspondence with them occupies many hours of tranquil happiness, and her felicity is doubled by making those whom she loves partakers of it. She has not,
like

like the ambitious Catharine, flattered the Russians by adopting their manners, their language, and their prejudices: she has not attempted to gain the esteem of this nation by despising her own, and blushing at her origin; but has made herself beloved for her goodness, and respected for her virtues*. We might, perhaps, grieve for her as a wife, were it not that the attachment of her charming family ought to be a source of sufficient happiness to her, and Russia may not improbably one day be indebted to her for national content. Her fruitfulness ensures a more tranquil

* Nothing can be more astonishing than that such a man as Mirabeau could relate, in his Secret Correspondence, such a silly anecdote of the grand-duchess of Russia. The young man, who is represented as the hero and relater of the story, was assuredly never in the company of that princess, or even at the court of Russia; and there is no truth in the scenery of this adventure, which would appear flat, ridiculous, and unworthy notice, had it not been related by Mirabeau.

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and natural successor, and the generous blood which she has transmuted into the branch of Holstein will mitigate, perhaps, the barbarity which it derives from the house of Romanof*.

It appears from this sketch, that Paul would have nothing to apprehend from the empress, even though the love of the nation for her, and its aversion to him, were to increase. The guards and the people would in vain entreat Mary to ascend her husband's throne; she would reject with horror the invitation. Paul,

* What I say of this princess is the homage of truth: she well knows, and I more strongly feel, it cannot be that of gratitude. It must be confessed too, that her good qualities are singularly obscured by a petty vanity, which makes her think and act like a person raised from a low station. The princess Dorothy of Wirtemberg, become Mary of Holstein-Romanof, might dispense with this gothic haughtiness; for her children, though grand-dukes, are disqualified by their paternal descent for admission to a chapter in Germany.

how-

however, never treated her with becoming respect till he became emperor*. The court then saw with astonishment this husband, hitherto so harsh and uncouth, change at once his conduct towards her. On his accession, he granted her the sum of five hundred thousand rubles (50,000 £.) for her private expenses, promising her at the same time a more ample provision†. He solicited the return of Mrs. Benkendorf, whom he had some years before dismissed from the service of his wife with circumstances of great indignity. To furnish Mary with occupations suitable to the bene-

* This period was soon at an end. I am informed, that Mary was put under arrest for twelve hours, for having given one of her women some trifling order which Paul did not approve. It appears that this war-like emperor conducts everything in a military style, even in his bed-chamber.

† As grand-duchess, she had only 60,000 rubles (6000 £.) a-year; and with this sum was more generous, and did more good, than at present.

volence

volence of her disposition and her sex, he appointed her superior of the convent of young ladies. In short, he treated her with the respect and attention he ought always to have shewn her. A conduct, so unexpected from Paul, caused great sensations. Various motives have been assigned for this change: but whatever may be the true cause, this at least is certain, that in his treatment of his wife, Paul wisely differs from his father, who, after his accession to the throne, behaved to Catharine with the same neglect and disrespect as before*.

[We have already seen, that Catharine was prevented by death from the execution of another design, which would

* It must be confessed, however, that Catharine, whose amours with Stanislaus Poniatofsky were a scandal to the whole court, gave her husband strong reasons for ill treating her; and that the conduct of Mary is irreproachable,

have

have proved more fatal to Paul, but that the youth and natural good disposition of his eldest son defeated it; who, by the purity of his morals and his personal charms, inspires a high degree of admiration. That ideal character which enchants us in Telemachus is almost realised in him. He may be reproached, too, with the same faults which Fénélon has bestowed on his imaginary pupil*; but these are, perhaps, not so much faults as the absence of certain qualities not yet developed in him, or which have been stifled in his heart by the miserable companions which have been allotted him. He inherits from Catharine magnanimity of sentiment and an unalterable equality of temper; a mind just and

* “ With a noble and well-disposed heart, he appeared neither obliging nor sensible to friendship, nor liberal, nor grateful for the pains taken on his account: neither was he prompt to acknowledge merit,” &c.—Telemachus, book xvi.

penetrating, and uncommon discretion; with the alloy, however, of a cautious disposition, a circumspection unsuitable to his age, and which might be taken for dissimulation, did it not evidently proceed rather from the delicate situation in which he was placed between his father and grandmother, than from his heart, which is naturally frank and ingenuous. He possesses his mother's stature and beauty, as well as her mildness and benevolence, while in none of his features does he resemble his father. Paul, conjecturing the intentions of Catharine in favor of this son, has always felt coldly towards him; at the same time he discovers in him no resemblance of character, and no conformity of taste with himself; for Alexander appears to do what his father requires of him, from a principle of filial duty rather than compliance with his own inclinations. His humanity has acquired him

the hearts of the soldiers, his good sense the admiration of the officers: he is the constant mediator between the emperor and those unhappy persons who, by some trifling neglect, may provoke his anger. He requires not the dignity of grand-duke of Russia to inspire sentiments of love and interest; nature has richly endowed him with the most amiable qualities, and his character of heir to the greatest empire in the world, cannot render them indifferent to humanity. Heaven, perhaps, destines him to render thirty millions of people more free than they are at present, and more worthy of being so.

His character, however, though amiable, is passive. He wants the courage and confidence to discover the man of merit, always modest and unobtrusive; and it is to be feared, that the most importunate and impudent, who are generally

nerally the most ignorant and vicious, will find little difficulty in procuring access to him. Yielding too easily to the impulses of others, he does not sufficiently consult his own heart and understanding.] He appears to have lost his relish for instruction, in losing his masters, and especially colonel la Harpe, his first preceptor, to whom he owes all the knowledge he has acquired. A too premature marriage has contributed to diminish his energy; and it is probable that, notwithstanding his good qualities, he will become in time the dupe of his courtiers, and even of his valets.

After this account of his character, it cannot be supposed that he will ever undertake of himself the odious project with which Catharine wished to inspire him. However, during the last illness of the empress, and for several days after her death, he was detained near the per-

son of his father with marks of tenderness, but not without symptoms of suspicion. Scarcely was he allowed an hour in the day to visit his young duchess. The emperor surrounded him with officers on whom he thought he could rely, and removed from their places all those who were not his creatures and spies: he took from him his own regiment to give him another, and appointed him military governor of Petersburg, naming at the same time, for his assistant or guardian, the ferocious Araktscheief. The revenue of the young prince, which hitherto had not exceeded thirty thousand rubles* (3000*l.*) was increased

* The great, the generous Catharine, whose magnificence astonished the universe, and who gave rubles by millions to her favorites, left her son and grandson in want of necessaries. Thirty thousand rubles in paper for a grand-duke of all the Russias! equal to sixty thousand livres French money (2500*l.*) Sometimes they were given in gold or silver: but they who had the management of the revenues of the young princes, took care to play the usurer, so that in their hands they were diminished nearly half.

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to two hundred thousand (20,000*l.*); and his father, by employing him in many trifling concerns, which detained him about his person nearly the whole day long, was manifestly desirous of watching over him himself. It is impossible not to praise the emperor for having thus attached to himself, by means so mild and natural, the object of his unjust suspicions; and we are pleased with these marks of affection for his children, to whom for fifteen years he never felt the resolution to give the least proof of his regard*.

The vulgar, who in general judge from the most deceitful appearances, perceiv-

* I am informed that the grand-duke Alexander has just been placed by Paul in the office of Besborodko, as Frederic the Great was by his Officer in the office of one of the Prussian ministers, to perform the functions of a simple clerk. Whether it be to procure him instruction, or to humble and punish him, the young prince will be one day the better for it.

ing in the grand-duke Alexander a reserve and circumspection of conduct, which they mistook for pride, were at first charmed with his younger brother Constantine. This prince does not possess the advantage of so agreeable and prepossessing a person as his brother; grimace serves him for wit, and buffoonery procures him popularity. He exhibits more than one trait of resemblance to the unhappy tzarovitch Alexis, especially in his aversion for the sciences, and the rudeness of his manners. He possessed, however, the germs of a sound heart and understanding, which his first masters neglected to cultivate, and which colonel la Harpe attempted in vain to improve, by extirpating the weeds that checked their growth. It will be happy for Constantine, when he arrives at an age of more discretion, should he revive and cultivate them himself.

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In other respects, he is a son worthy of his father: the same eccentricities, the same passions, the same severity, and the same turbulence, distinguish him; but he will never possess the information which his father has acquired, nor his capacity, though he promises in time to equal, and even to surpass him, in the art of manœuvring a dozen automats. Can it be believed, that a prince of seventeen, lively and vigorous, would, on the morning after his marriage to a young and beautiful woman, leave his bride at five o'clock to manœuvre in the court of his palace a couple of soldiers, who were placed there as centinels, and upon whom he inflicted at the same time repeated strokes of his cane? Yet such was the conduct of the grand-duke Constantine. I know not whether this military mania promises a
good

good general, but sure I am that it is a proof of a very bad husband*.

Paul, though he found in his own family no cause to fear the misfortunes

* Some time before his marriage, he had a detachment of soldiers given him for his amusement. After having tormented these poor wretches for some months, he went so far as to cane the major who commanded them. The major had the courage to complain to count Soltikof, and the favorite related the story to the empress. She ordered her grandson under arrest, and took from him his soldiers, who were not returned to him till after his marriage.

Many other stories might be told of this young prince, but it would be only repeating the vulgar tricks of a boy without education. His grandmother perceived it too late to remedy it. In his childhood he bit and struck his masters; now he strikes the officers at their exercise, and knocks out the teeth of the poor soldiers. The king of Sweden being with all the court at a ball given by Samoilof, he said to him, "Do you know in whose house you are?—That of the greatest w—— in Petersburg." His grandmother put him under arrest.

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of his father, or any attempt dangerous to his tranquillity, had not equal reason to be satisfied on the part of the nobility. It is certain that he was disliked by them all, and for ten years was a subject of ridicule at the court of his mother: but Potemkin was no more. A diminutiveness in virtue as in vice, was the characteristic of all who approached the throne: no one possessed that strength of capacity which is necessary to accomplish a revolution, and all wanted that energy which great crimes demand. Catharine could, with more justice than the countess of Murralt, have bestowed on her ministers the epithet which she gave to her wits*. A slight sketch of each of these personages will be sufficient to prove the truth of what I have advanced.

* It is well known that she called them *Les dunces*.

Count and prince Zubof, the last favorite of Catharine, was thirty years of age and upwards. He was far from possessing the genius and ambition of Orlof and Potemkin, though in the end he united in his person more power and credit than these celebrated favorites had ever enjoyed. Potemkin was indebted for his elevation almost solely to himself. Zubof owed his to the infirmities of Catharine. He increased in power, in riches, and in credit, because the activity of Catharine was diminished, her vigor abated, and her understanding impaired. During the last years of her life, this young man found himself literally emperor of all the Russias. He had the folly to wish, or to appear, to direct everything; but, having no knowledge of the routine of affairs, he was obliged to reply, to those who asked him for instructions, *Sdelaïte kak pré-gedé*, "Do as before." Nothing equalled his

his haughtiness but the fervility of those who strove to prostrate themselves before him; and it must be acknowledged, that the meanness of the Russian courtiers has always surpassed the impudence of the favorites of Catharine. All crouched at the feet of Zubof: he stood erect, and thought himself great. Every morning a numerous court besieged his doors, and filled his antichambers. Veteran generals and grandees of the empire did not blush to caress his most insignificant valets*. Stretched with indecent negligence on a sofa, his little finger in his nose, his eyes vacantly turned towards the ceiling, this young man, of a cold and vain physiognomy, scarcely deigned to pay attention to those who surrounded him. He amused himself with the tricks of his ape, which leaped on the

* These valets have been frequently seen to beat back the officers and generals who crowded round the doors, and prevented them from being shut.

shoulders

shoulders of his degraded courtiers, or conversed with his buffoon; while the veterans, under some of whom he had been a serjeant, the Dolgorukys, the Gallitzins, the Soltikofs, and all who were distinguished for their exploits or their crimes, standing around him, waited with profound silence till he condescended to turn his eyes towards them, that they might again prostrate themselves before him. The name of Catharine figured in his conversation, but he scarcely deigned to pay the heir of the crown that exterior respect which the etiquette of the court required; and even Paul was forced to humble himself before a petty officer of the guards, who, but a short time before, had begged his pardon for having offended one of his dogs *. To obtain money or favors for his

* Paul had a dog of which he was fond. This dog, roaming round the palace, attempted to snatch a piece

his dependants, the grand-duke Constantine paid him the most assiduous court. Meanwhile, none of the twelve favorites of Catharine appeared so poorly endowed in person and mind as Zubof. In his elevation, he displayed no genius, no virtues, no passions, unless we account

piece of meat from a trumpeter belonging to the guards. The soldier gave him a blow over the head with his trumpet. The dog ran howling and bloody to the apartments of Paul, who was in a rage on hearing the story. "Ah!" cried he, "everything belonging to me, everything I love, is an object of persecution. I have but one dog, and they want to kill it. Let the officer on guard be sent to me, and let him be punished!" The officer on guard at that time was Zubof, who, informed of the rage of the grand-duke, went and threw himself at the feet of Soltikof, his patron, to beg he would go with him and solicit his pardon. It was with difficulty Soltikof could obtain it; for Paul was persuaded that his dog had been beaten out of hatred to him, and because he was detested by the guards. The trumpeter maintained that he did not know to whom the dog belonged; and this Paul took for a fresh insult, for which he would certainly have inflicted a severe punishment, had it been in his power.

as such the vanity and avarice which distinguished him; accordingly, when his power expired, his emptiness was apparent. The immense wealth of his family, and the vast estates extorted by his father from the landholders of his provinces, are the monuments which he has left of his administration*. The death of the empress reduced him in a moment to the obscurity from which she had drawn him; as the ephemeron of a day, produced by the sun, flutters in his kindly beams, but cannot survive the passing breeze. Zubof lamented Catharine, as a son bewails the loss of his mother; and this was the only moment of his life in which he appeared at all interesting. It is also just to observe,

* Zubof's father was made a judge; and, to enrich himself, he bought up all the old causes in the court, or made the parties relinquish them to him, and then decided them himself, or caused them to be decided in his favor.

that,

that, mingling with the crowd, he discovered more readily the station that was suitable to his insignificance, than the courtiers did theirs, which ought to have been still by his side. They shewed themselves yet more base than he was humbled; and though for the first days his antichambers were deserted, for a long time afterwards, when he appeared at court, the stupid courtiers made way for him, and prostrated themselves before him as before a sovereign; so difficult is it for slaves to recover the dignity of manhood! We must do him the farther justice to acknowledge, that he did not, like a Mentchikof and a Biren, people the deserts of Siberia; though, at the instigation of Esterhazy and other French emigrants, he committed acts of great injustice and inquisitorial violence; and the calamities of Poland may in part be considered as his work.

The

The emperor, who, at the moment of his accession, treated him with astonishing respect, confirmed him, in the most flattering terms, in all his employments; bestowed on his brother the first order of Russia, solely for having undertaken a journey to Gatchina; made him a present of one of his military uniforms;—the emperor, I say, having measured his man, perceived that he had nothing to fear from him; accordingly, the seal was suddenly put on his chancery, and it was the grand-duke Constantine, lately his most assiduous courtier, who executed this commission, as officer of the police, with all the rudeness which is natural to him*. His secretaries

* It is to be observed, that Zubof, who had all places in his hands, and the secretaries, who had all public affairs in theirs, were sent off in four-and-twenty hours, without making them give any account, or demanding any information. The confusion this occasioned will appear in the sequel.

were

were banished, or driven from the court* ; his creatures exiled, or imprisoned ;

* The two most famous are Altesti and Gribofsky. The former is a Ragusan, whom the Russian minister Bolkunof took from a merchant's compting-house in Constantinople to employ him in his office. When war was declared, he came to Petersburg to solicit employment, and got into the service of Zubof, who was growing in favor. He understood several languages, and was not destitute of sense. He soon became the penman of Zubof, and even of the empress. A pamphlet, which he wrote in French against the king and revolutionists of Poland, and in which he treated the former as a factionary, the latter as jacobins, stuffing it with epithets, lies, stupidities, and flattery, established his reputation and his fortune. This libel was spread abroad like a manifesto. Titles, orders of knighthood, and slaves, were presently lavished on Altesti. Not contented with these gifts, he enriched himself prodigiously by other means. The Polish confederates, the governments, the Cossacs, &c. were eager to purchase his protection and services by hard ducats. All the affairs of Poland were in his hands, and on him depended wealth, liberty, and life ; for he made out the lists of the proscribed. He grew uncommonly haughty and impudent ; but an impertinent trick he played count Golowin, who had the courage to complain of it, at length ruined him. He had orders to

soned *; and all the officers of his staff, or of his suite, upwards of two hundred

retire to his estates; but Zubof had obtained his recall, and he was on the point of re-entering into office a few days before the death of Catharine. One of the first orders of Paul was an injunction to him to depart in twenty-four hours. Altesti has talents, but is ungrateful: he occasioned the disgrace of Bolkunof, his first benefactor.

Gribofsky, the other secretary, was a Russian. He had not the understanding of his colleague, but perhaps a better heart, and acquired nearly equal influence. He was the son of a clergyman, and began his career as a copyist in the office of Potemkin. In less than two years, under Zubof, he attained the rank of colonel, and his luxury and expensive mode of living astonished and disgusted all Petersburg. The finest ladies admired his person, and he was flattered by the greatest lords. He kept a band of music, buffoons, mistresses, and horses. In the spring he gave suppers, with desserts of fruit not to be seen at the empress's table; and I was present at an entertainment where every one paid his shot, the dessert of which, furnished by him, was reckoned, in consequence of the season, at five hundred rubles (50*l.*)

* Among others, Kapiel, a young man, who would have deserved a better fate had his heart been equal to his

hundred in number, were obliged to join immediately their respective corps, or give in their resignation. To remove him with less indignity from the palace, a large mansion was given him as a present, and all his offices were then withdrawn. He did not himself give in his resignation of thirty different employments till in reality he no longer held them. The emperor created Nicholas Soltikof field-marshal, and restored to his office the administration of military affairs, which had been taken from it by Zubof. It was then that the disorders and abuses which pervaded the service were discovered. The favorite, who, to enrich himself, carried on a war in Persia, the conducting of which

his head: he was accused of having said to one of his friends, whom he met in Paul's new uniform, "Good morning: what! you are going to a masquerade!"

was entrusted to his brother*, had not condescended to submit to the college of war the ordinary reports; and the troops which he had marched towards Gallicia were equally neglected; so that, when it became necessary to make a new arrangement of the army, it was not known where the greater part of the regiments were, and still less in what condition they would be found. Officers, who had to rejoin their corps, knew not to what quarter of the world they should set off to find them, and in vain attended the offices to obtain the necessary information †.

A few

* At the empress's table, during the visit of the king of Sweden, the conversation turned on some news just brought by a courier. "It is but a trifle," said Zubof to a Swede: "my brother sends us word, that he has gained a battle, and conquered a province: that is nothing new."

† This was frequently the case in Russia; but the following will excite more astonishment. A Frenchman,

A few weeks after, Zubof obtained permission, or rather received orders, to quit Russia. Like all his predecessors, he went into Germany to exhibit the brilliants, the orders, and the portraits which he had received from Catharine: but of all the gifts of his old mistress, the rubles are those which he has used

man, the chevalier Roger, having solicited count Solitkoff, through the medium of major M**, to give him the post of commandant of some remote place, as he wished for such a retirement, where he might live with his wife more cheaply, the minister gave orders to see whether any such place was vacant. Being informed that fort Peter and Paul in the government of Oremburg was without a commandant, Roger was appointed to the post, and set off. Some months after, major M** received a letter from Roger in the following words: "I am arrived in the country where my fort was said to be; but judge of my surprise on being informed that it was destroyed by Pugatshoff twenty years ago, and exists no longer. Finding myself in a desert with my family, without an asylum, and without resource, I have been obliged to return to Oremburg." This letter was shewn to the minister, who gave Roger another post.

with

with most discretion. After having taken with him a girl disguised as a valet, he fell in love at Tœplitz with a pretty emigrant of the name of Roche-Aimon: but he there soon became acquainted with the young princesses of Courland, who, with the graces and beauty they inherit from their mother, and the immense fortunes which their father will leave them, are the most desirable heiresses in Europe. He endeavoured, accordingly, to pay his court to the old duke, whom a little before he had attempted to strip of his sovereignty, and towards whom he had affected so much haughtiness at Petersburg. The duke expressed to him his resentment and contempt; but Zubof, unaccustomed to meet with obstacles, conceived the design of carrying off the eldest princess by force. Whether, however, the duke complained to the emperor, or Paul was actuated by other motives, he dispatched an order
to

to Zubof to return to Russia; and it is probable that the last favorite of Catharine has, by this time, acted his last part.

Count Nicholas Soltikof, field-marshal, minister of war, and grand-master to the young grand-dukes * * * * *

* * * * *

* * * * *

The old vice-chancellor Ostermann, whom Paul hastened to advance to the post of chancellor, in order to get rid of him, burdened with old age and infirmities, no longer appeared at court but as a remembrance of past times. He was far from acting under Catharine the part which his father had played under the reign of Anne, and from deserving the same disgrace from Paul which his father had merited from Elizabeth. He had the name only of vice-chancellor

chancellor, and the dispatch of some passports which were given him to sign. Diplomatic and foreign affairs were divided in the office of Zubof between Besborodko and Markof, who were the actual authors of all the ministerial papers; and the first of whom particularly enjoyed an immense credit, which even balanced that of the favorite.

Besborodko and Markof were perfect contrasts to each other. The one was awkward, clownish, negligent, disorderly, his stockings about his heels, and had the gait of an elephant; though richly habited, he appeared always as if he had dressed himself at the conclusion of a debauch, which still oppressed him with the stupidity of drowsiness: the other was so minutely attentive to dress, that he might pass for the ridiculous marquis of some of our comedies; and so absurdly affected that he never entered

tered a room or bowed but according to the rules of a dancing-master, never walked but on his toes, and never took snuff without displaying the brilliants which sparkled on his fingers. When he spoke too, it was always in the ear of the person with whom he discoursed; his conversation consisted of bon-mots, his answers of points; and the same study and affectation were perceptible in his attempts at wit as in his dress and manners.

Besborodko, notwithstanding the depravity of his morals, is active, and occasionally laborious. Advanced from the situation of clerk in the chancery to the rank of prime-minister*, he is well acquainted

* At first a writer in the office of Romanzof, he became secretary to Catharine, and the following is said to have led the way to his fortune. Having been ordered one day to draw up a ukase, he forgot it, and appeared before the empress without it. On her asking

acquainted with the routine of affairs, and writes with facility; but the negligence and disorder which characterise his person are equally perceptible in all the offices under his administration, and particularly in the management of posts, of which he is director-general, and which is an office open to the inspection of every one*.

ing for it, Belborodko, without being disconcerted, took from his pocket a sheet of blank paper, in which he began to read, as if it contained the ukase in question. Catharine, satisfied with the language, asked for the paper, that she might sign it, and was much astonished to find it blank. This facility of extemporaneous composition struck her; and, far from reproaching the secretary with his negligence or deceit, she made him minister of state, for knowing the style of a ukase by heart, and having had the boldness to impose it on her.

* Of all parts of the country, the estates of the director-general of the post were those where horses were never to be had, and where travellers were sure to be taken in.

Before

Before his appointment, it was the best conducted public institution in Russia: under his administration it will soon become the worst. His office is a devouring gulph, from which nothing returns; and the advantages which principally distinguish his house are the multitude of entrances and secret stair-cases by which he contrives to escape, in quitting, or to shun, in entering, the unhappy expectants, who wait whole days in the antichamber*. It is necessary to have the clue of Ariadne to reach this Minotaur; who, without doubt, would be found at the extremity of his labyrinth,

* It is said, that an attorney, not being able to get sight of him, at length contrived to slip into his carriage, and wait for him there. Besborodko, astonished at the boldness of the scheme, heard the man's tale, and promised to make his business known to the empress: but the man would not quit his post, and remained in the carriage till Besborodko came out of the palace, that he might have an answer. Report says it was a favorable one.

engaged

engaged in making some young beauty his prey.

If the morals of Markof are not edifying, it must be admitted that he does not traverse the *Metschansky** like Beshorodko. He is attached to a tragic actress of the name of Hus, who has great influence over him, and who at least endeavours to be respectable in the character of mother, which her admirer often succeeds in conferring upon her†. On the talent which is ascribed to these two ministers, of being able, the one to translate impromptu into Russ, the other into French, the ministerial

* The name of the quarter of Petersburg in which girls of the town most abound.

† The emperor, as a refinement of vengeance, forbade Hus to accompany Markof in his exile; saying, she belonged to the court, and not to him. This tragic actress, who possesses considerable talents, had converted the French theatre into an aristocracy, over which she presided.

papers,

papers, I set but little value. All the compositions I have read of the one or of the other, especially of Markof, have neither been distinguished for elegance of style, nor clearness of expression. I do not speak of logic, the details which they have had to give having been generally too absurd to assort with it. Besides, under Catharine II. Russian diplomatics did not require splendid talents. She employed two means more persuasive than either argument or eloquence—threats and money, the effects of which are always fear and corruption. The prejudice of many parts of Europe, and especially of Germany, in favor of Russia, is astonishing. One might be led to conclude from it, that the cabinet of Petersburg was composed of men of superior abilities: the court of Vienna crouches beneath its influence, and that of Berlin has not yet been able to dismiss its fears and respect.

spect. Doubtless, if the intelligent statesmen of Germany could have a clear view of those men who have dazzled them, they would be ashamed of having so long mistaken the false lustre of a corrupted throne for the true radiance of genius, paper for money, threats for greatness, and presumption for ability.

Besborodko, who had always worn shoes and buckles like Paul, and who was also extremely rich and powerful, was at first treated with respect*. Markof, who did not possess these advantages to the same degree, was dismissed with indignity, and publicly disgraced. He is the same person who was formerly

* He was made a *prince*, and was worthy of being one. He continued Paul's prime-minister; and it was he who, in the name of his master, declared war on the French republic; citing as a motive decrees, which I believe are known to himself. He is now dead.

sent

sent from Holland to Paris, where he is still remembered by the appellation of the stupid Markof.

The present count Samoïlof, attorney-general of the empire, had no other merit to distinguish him than that of being the nephew of Potemkin, and bearing a slight and deceitful resemblance of him. His capacity was unequal to the duties of his office, in right of which he was grand-treasurer and president of the senate, and of all the courts of the empire. It was against his own inclination that he was called from the army to fill these civil employments. He acknowledged that he did not possess the necessary talents; but his deficiency was his chief recommendation, for they wanted a passive agent, who should be unable, from want of capacity, to counteract the views of Catharine or her favorites. It was at his house that the
infamous

infamous inquisition re-assembled which Ann erected under the name of the *Secret Chancery*, which Peter III. thought it his duty to abolish, which Catharine revived under another form, and the worthy members of which Paul carefully disperses in the antichambers of particular houses. The palace of Samoïlof, which is one of the most elegant in Petersburg, contains several prisons for the detention of accused persons, where they are safely kept till they can privately be disposed of. It is apparently on this account alone that many consider it as a public building. In other respects, Samoïlof was insignificant and like the *as* carrying reliques. Paul, to reward him for the readiness with which he caused the oath of fidelity to be taken by the senate, bestowed on him four thousand peasants, under pretence that his mother had already promised them. Some days after he was suddenly removed

moved from his place, and prince Kurakin appointed his successor.

But the man against whom the blood and tears of thousands of victims cried most loudly for vengeance, he who ought to have suffered first beneath the axe of justice, if the successor of Catharine had been endowed with firmness, equity, and humanity, was Arkarof, governor-general of Petersburg. This man, or rather this savage, had distinguished himself for a long time by a brutality of conduct worthy of an executioner of Attila. He was governor of Tver, where he exercised a system of robbery, the details of which would excite horror and appear incredible, when Catharine, towards the end of her life, placed him near her person. This is the man whom she judged worthy to be the guardian of her crown, when the French revolution, the Zubofs,

the Esterhazys, and perhaps her own remorse, began to fill her with suspicions and terror. He soon displayed, in a more extensive field, those horrid qualities which had been the scourge of the provinces of Mosco and Tver. Upon the death of Catharine, the fall of Zubof, and the accession of Paul, the punishment of this monster was expected as an event that could not fail to take place. Innumerable victims of his tyrannies cast themselves at the feet of Paul, and demanded justice and vengeance. The emperor, however, granted no redress to complaints of abuse of power or oppression, but contented himself with commanding Arkarof to pay some debts. Of all those who enjoyed the confidence of the mother, he was, by a horrible exception in favor of his talents, the only one who obtained the confidence of the son. He was confirmed in all his old, and even raised to new employ-

employments. Nevertheless, the complaints of honest men, and the cries of the people, increased against him. It is said, that Paul, when on his way to Mosco to be crowned, found the road strewn with petitions against this new Sejanus*.

From this account of four or five persons, who held the reins of government at the death of Catharine, it appears that Paul had nothing to apprehend from them: all of them were rich, their fortunes made, and none of them young. It cannot, however, be too carefully observed, with what eagerness Paul still loaded with wealth these blood-suckers of the state, before he discarded them. His motives are obvious: as soon as he thought he had no longer anything to fear from them, he disgraced

* He is now in disgrace, though not for his crimes.

them. The sudden death of his mother prevented any other party from forming at court, and there was no individual at the head of the armies in a situation to undertake anything. The three generals in chief, who commanded then the principal armies of the empire, were as remote from each other, by means of their different manners, views, and characters, as by the immense distance which actually separated them.

The most eminent was prince Nicholas Repnin, whose name has so often resounded through Europe conjunctly with that of the celebrated Romanzof*.

He

* I make no mention, likewise, of that old warrior, whom the ingratitude of Catharine, who was indebted to him for her first triumphs, will render for ever celebrated, no less than his own exploits. He was himself dying at the time of the empress's decease; and, though he had the command of an army, his debility rendered him inactive. Paul wore mourning for him

He was, with this veteran warrior, the only general of signal merit in the armies of Catharine, whose appearance and person did not exhibit a perfect contrast to their reputation. In the last war but one against the Turks, he acted a brilliant part as a general, and displayed

him three days, and ordered all his army to do the same. For twenty years he had left off visiting the court; and, whether in retirement or in the camp, led a life as selfish as philosophic; for he is less to be honored as a husband or a father, than as a general. He parted from his wife, and remained as much a stranger to his family as la Fontaine. One of his sons having finished his studies, came to the army to him to ask a commission. "Who are you?" said Romanzof. "Your son."—"O, very well! you are grown up, I see." After a few more questions *equally* paternal, the young man asked, where he should take up his abode, and what he was to do. "Why, to be sure, you are acquainted with some officer or other in the camp!" said his father. It is a fact no less singular, that his son, Sergius Romanzof, returning from his embassy to Sweden, asked Nicholas Soltikof for a letter of recommendation to his father, that he might be well received by him.

great

great abilities as a negotiator at Constantinople. He was afterwards distinguished in Poland by as much politeness as haughtiness. He then submitted ignominiously to the ascendancy of Potemkin, who treated him as a respectable character of past times. In his old age he still further diminished his early reputation by an attachment to the mysteries of martinism and the illuminés; and we are at a loss to determine, whether it was the humility of a devotee, the baseness of a courtier, or the stoicism of a patriotic hero, that enabled him to bear the insolence of Potemkin and the hatred of Catharine, who, while they availed themselves of his military talents, loaded him with insults. He had incurred the hatred of Catharine by declaring in favor of Paul, and advising him to assert his rights to the crown, of which his mother had only been proclaimed guardian and regent. In the last war

war against the Turks, Repnin acted a very inferior part, yoking himself voluntarily to the car of Potemkin, lest he should otherwise not be harnessed at all; for he was resolved to serve, though they might be even unwilling to employ him. In the antichambers of the favorites he prostituted his laurels and his white hairs more eagerly than a young officer who had still his fortune to make. How different was Repnin here to Repnin when ambassador at Warsaw, giving audience to the king of Poland in his dressing-gown*! or rather, it was the same

- * One day, the king coming to pay him a visit, he ran and put on a morning-gown to receive him. After a trifling excuse, and a slight bow, he turned his back to the looking-glass, which was opposite Stanislaus, acting in a manner that would have disgraced a merry-andrew, and which delicacy forbids me to mention. At Riga, he received d'Artois almost as rudely, pretending not to know him, and leaving him alone by the fire. He was piqued at the air of superiority which the French prince assumed, and at his not saluting the guard, which paid him military honors.

character;

character; for the haughtiest persons will always be found to be the most servile.

When Potemkin, however, was detained from the camp by the pleasures and festivities of Petersburg, as has been already mentioned, Repnin, to whom he had left the command of the army during his absence, so far emancipated himself as to neglect the order he had received to remain inactive. He suddenly passed the Danube, and, by a skilful march, surprised and defeated the grand army of the visier Yussuf. This gallant and successful action revived the faded laurels of Repnin. The court resounded with his praises: they compared this bold and decisive campaign with those of Potemkin, who was content every winter to attack some fortresses, the capture of which cost so much blood, and who had never found a Turkish army
to

to fight with. Roused from his lethargy by this blow, which disgraced and threatened him, Potemkin abandoned his pleasures, and entered into Moldavia. His interview with Repnin was a terrible explosion, which the conqueror of the Turks sustained with more firmness than was expected of him. But he was driven from the army, and obliged to acquiesce in his dismissal, for having gained a most decisive victory, and forced the Turks to solicit an ignominious peace: such was still the influence of Potemkin, and the condescension of the ungrateful Catharine! On the death of Potemkin, which happened shortly after, Repnin repaired to Petersburg, and degraded his old age and his honors in the antichamber of Zubof, who, flattered to see the old warrior in the number of his assiduous courtiers, appointed him governor-general of Livonia. In the consternation

sternation and rage into which Catharine was thrown by the massacre of the Russians in Warsaw, he received orders to collect the regiments of his province, and to invade Poland. He was at this period the only general of great reputation, and the oldest in the army: he had the further satisfaction of seeing his sovereign, contrary to her inclination, obliged to employ him. The regular and cautious march, however, of Repnin, through Lithuania, did not accord with the impatient vengeance of Catharine: she thirsted for blood, for the blood of all the inhabitants of Warsaw; and she let loose from another quarter the furious Suvarof, who, as far as the gates of Prague, strewed his rout with carcases. Repnin then received the severest insult he had ever swallowed, but he digested it as readily as former ones. Suvarof was created field-marshal, and appointed

pointed commander over the man whose orders the day before he had received, and by whom he was despised*. Catharine added even raillery to insult, by making a present of a house to Repnin, for having been passed over in this appointment. The whole army resented this treatment of the veteran; several

* Suvarof caused the first report sent him by Repnin to be read aloud to him two or three times over, in the presence of his staff, making a thousand antics, pretending to be deaf, that the reader might raise his voice, and astonished at receiving a report from prince Repnin, whom he thus cruelly rallied. Catharine was always very despotic, and always made seniority give way to favor. At the death of Potemkin, Kamenskoi, one of her best generals, took the command of the army as a matter of right, and sent his first report accordingly. He said, "Having taken the command in consequence of my seniority, &c." against which Catharine wrote in the margin, "Who gave you orders?" He then spoke of the disorder which he found prevailing among the troops, and in the margin Catharine wrote, "He dared not say a word while the prince was alive." In answer to his report, Kamenskoi received orders to quit the army.

generals

generals remonstrated, and count John Soltikof, with generous pride, resigned his commission. Repnin alone, Repnin, who had most reason to be offended, and was most capable of making it felt, who could with impunity shew that he was susceptible of resentment and honor, like a stoic or christian, submitted to this disgrace.

On his accession, Paul at length created him field-marshal, and the last warlike exploit of Repnin was the executing military vengeance on some villages in the government of Novgorod, on the occasion to which we alluded in a former page.

Repnin, who has shewn himself a great general, as well as an imperious minister and a servile courtier, possesses some personal qualities rarely to be met with in Russian generals. Not only his figure,
but

but his manners and carriage, are noble. His heart is humane*, and he is destitute alike of the Muscovitish grossness of his colleagues towards their inferiors†, and

* Particularly towards the soldiers. Reviewing a regiment of cavalry, he said, "I inquire only about the men: as to the horses, they are bought by the colonel, and therefore I know better care is taken of them."

† His behaviour to his officers, however, while at Berlin, shocked the Prussians, to whom the haughtiness of the Russian generals was unknown. At this place, it was matter of astonishment to see Repnin gravely stalking along, decorated with the badges of all his orders of knighthood, while a kniaz, Volkusky his nephew, several aides-de-camp, and Thiemann the martinist, his secretary, followed him at some paces distance. Every time he turned about to utter a word, his attendants halted, and took off their hats. His political mission, however, did not succeed. This prince, a field-marshal, formerly ambassador triumphant at Constantinople, and omnipotent at Warsaw, neither frightened nor cajoled the young king of Prussia, whom Paul had ordered him to oblige to rejoin the coalition. Repnin, dismissed from Berlin, repaired to Vienna, where the success of his negotiation is visible. But one of his secretaries, said to be a Frenchman of the name of Aubert,

and that rapacious avarice which has always distinguished them. On the contrary, he is compassionate and generous, and Lithuania is greatly indebted to him, for it was by him and prince Galitzin that it was saved from total ruin.

A stranger, who has heard the name of Suvarof, wishes, on his arrival in Russia, to see this hero. An old man is pointed out, of a weather-beaten and shrivelled figure, who traverses the apartments of the palace, hopping on one foot, or is seen running and gambolling in the streets, followed by a troop

Aubert, stole off with part of the papers and secrets of his embassy. This enraged Paul, and he dismissed Repnin at his return, for not having succeeded at Berlin, and for having employed a Frenchman in his service: however, as a mark of singular clemency, he is allowed to wear the uniform of armies which he has commanded with glory for forty years.

of

of boys, to whom he throws apples, to make them scramble and fight, crying himself, "I am Suvarof! I am Suvarof!" If the stranger should fail to discover in this old madman the conqueror of the Turks and the Poles, he will at least, in his haggard and ferocious eyes, his foaming and horrid mouth, readily discern the butcher of the inhabitants of Prague. Suvarof would be considered as the most ridiculous buffoon, if he had not shewn himself the most barbarous warrior. He is a monster, with the body of an ape and the soul of a bull-dog. Attila, his countryman, and from whom he is perhaps descended, had neither his good fortune nor his ferocity. His gross and ridiculous manners have inspired his soldiers with the blindest confidence, which serves him instead of military talents, and has been the real cause of all his successes. He is accounted a brave and successful warrior; that,

that, educated in camps, is unacquainted with the court, and ignorant how to flatter and fawn on a favorite. After having distinguished himself as a subaltern, he advanced step by step to the rank of commander in chief. He is endowed with a natural ferocity, which serves him for bravery, and spills blood, like a tiger, by instinct. He lives in the army like a simple Cossack: he arrives at court like an ancient Scythian; and, during his stay, will accept no other lodging than the carriage which brought him. To relate the details of his life would be to record a series of extravagancies; and certainly if he be not mad, the ability to counterfeit madness is among the first of his qualifications, but his folly is the folly of a barbarian, which has nothing agreeable in it.

He has not, however, been always successful. At the siege of Otchakof,
the

the Turks having made a feigned fortie, he chose, contrary to the orders of Potemkin, to pursue them, hoping to enter the city with the fugitives. A battery of mortars was opened upon him, and his whole column destroyed. He entered upon the assault of Ismaïl without having reconnoitred the place*, and his exploits in Poland are those of a brigand. He hastened his march thither to satisfy the vengeance of Catharine, and to massacre the remains of an army already

* He usually announced his success in two or three words, and frequently in a couple of bad burlesque Russian verses. Cæsar wrote to the senate, *Veni, vidi, vici*. Suvarof might with propriety be more concise by one-third than Cæsar, for he always conquered without seeing. He said himself: "Kamenskoi knows war, but war knows nothing of him: I do not know her, but she knows me: as to J. Soltikof, he neither knows her nor is known by her." A few such traits, and a few happy quotations of ancient history, have given Suvarof reputation. His partisans reported that he frequently shut himself up to study the dead languages, and even Hebrew. French and German he speaks tolerably.

defeated by Fresen, and deprived of the brave Kosciuszko, its principal strength. Suvarof, embracing the inhabitants of Warsaw, and granting them pardon on the bodies of twenty thousand citizens of every age and sex, resembles a satiated tiger that plays with his prey on the bones of his charnel-house.

The singularity of his manners is as striking as the eccentricity of his mind. He retires to rest at six in the evening, and rises at two in the morning, when he bathes himself in cold water, or causes pails of water to be thrown over his naked body. He dines at eight, and his dinner, like his breakfast, consists of the coarsest and commonest food of the soldiers, and brandy: a man trembles to be invited to such a repast. Often, in the middle of the entertainment, one of his *aides-de-camp* rises; and, approaching him, forbids him to eat any more. “ By
“ whose

“whose order am I forbidden?” demands Suvarof.—“By order of marshal Suvarof himself,” answers the aide-de-camp. Suvarof, rising, then says, “He must be obeyed.” In the same manner he causes himself to be commanded in his own name to walk or to do any other necessary thing.

During his stay at Warsaw, a crowd of Austrian or Prussian officers pressed to see this original. Before he made his appearance, he inquired of which of these officers there was the greatest number; if Austrians, he decorated himself with a portrait of Joseph II. entered his antichamber, leaping into the middle of the circle, and offered to each of them the picture to kiss, repeating, “Your emperor knows me, and loves me also.” If Prussians composed the majority, he wore the order of the Black Eagle, and made the same grimaces. At court, he

is sometimes seen to run from lady to lady, and kiss the portrait of Catharine which they wear at the breast, crossing himself, and bowing. Catharine told him one day to behave himself more decently.

He is a devotee, and superstitious. He obliges his captains to pray aloud before their companies; and ill treats those foreign officers or Livonians who are unacquainted with the Russian prayers.

Sometimes he visits the hospitals of the camp, calling himself a physician. Those whom he finds extremely ill he obliges to take rhubarb or salts, and on those who are but slightly indisposed, he bestows blows. Often he drives all the sick from the hospital, saying, "It is not permitted to the soldiers of Suvarof to be sick." In his armies, all those

those manœuvres are prohibited which relate to a retreat, as he shall never, he says, have occasion to adopt them. He exercises his soldiers himself, and makes them charge with the bayonet in three different ways. When he says, "March against the Poles," the soldier plunges his bayonet once; "March against the Prussians," the soldier strikes twice; "March against the execrable French," the soldier then makes two thrusts forward, and a third in the ground, and there sinks and turns round his bayonet. His hatred against the French was extreme. His letter to Charette has been seen in various newspapers. He wrote to Catharine from Warsaw, and frequently in these words: "Mother, permit me to march against the French." When the death of Catharine took place, he had already advanced for that purpose into Galicia at the head of forty thousand men.

Fre-

Frequently he rides through his camp, naked to his shirt, on the bare back of a Cossack horse; and at day-break, instead of causing the drums to beat the *reveille* he comes out of his tent, and crows three times like a cock, which is the signal for the army to rise, sometimes to march, or even to go to battle.

In the multiplicity of extravagances which he commits, or of insipid things which he says, if any singular or striking trait falls from him, every one repeats and admires it as a burst of genius. This man has nevertheless some virtues: he has shewn occasionally an uncommon disinterestedness, and even generosity, as well in refusing the gifts of Catharine as in distributing them about him. He will slaughter the wretch who asks life, but he will give money to him who asks charity. Almost at the same moment he gnashes his teeth in rage like a madman,
laughs

laughs and grins like an ape, or weeps piteously like an old woman.

Such is the too celebrated Suvarof. He quarrelled with his wife, and would not acknowledge a son whom he had by her, preferring his nephews, the princes Gortschakof: but the empress having made this son an officer in the guards, he said, "As the empress chuses
" I shall have a son, be it so; but for
" myself, I know nothing of the mat-
" ter." He had also a daughter, maid of honor to Catharine, who was distinguished at court for idiotism. Her father, after an absence of several years, appointed a meeting with her at the house of a third person. "Ah, father," cried she, "how big you have grown
" since I saw you." In French, this would have passed for a happy play upon words, but in Russ it was a blunder that excited universal laughter.

After

After the capture of Warsaw, he repaired to Petersburg to enjoy the fruits of his glory; and this Scythian, who had never before any other lodging than his carriage, accepted apartments in the Taurique palace, and wore a superb marshal's uniform, which was given him by Catharine. When he received this dress, he played a thousand antics, hugging it in his arms, kissing it, and making signs of the cross; and when he lifted it, he said, "I am not astonished they do not give such a dress as this to little Nicholas Soltikof; it would be too heavy for him to wear*."

We have seen the manner in which Paul dismissed him on his accession, and the motives which instigated him. The murmurs of the army afterwards obliged the emperor to recal him.

* Nicholas Soltikof was one of those most hurt by the promotion of Suvarof.

Valerian

Valerian Zubof, brother to the favorite, commanded the army which acted in Persia. Mention has before been made of this young libertine, who is naturally of a frank, honest, and courageous disposition, but has been corrupted by favor. He had lost a leg in Poland, and was on crutches when he went to conquer Asia*. One of his couriers arrived at the moment of the death of Catharine, with the account of a battle. Paul sent him ribands of the order of St. Anne to distribute among his officers, and to each of the colonels a private order to lead their regiments to the frontiers. The general remained behind in his camp, without knowing what he was to do. He afterwards followed his army,

* At the news of his wound, Catharine sent him her own surgeon, the riband of the order of St. Andrew, the rank of general in chief, and 100,000 rubles (10,000*l.*) to defray the expense of his cure. He demanded 500,000 (50,000*l.*) more, to pay his debts.

and

and on his arrival at Petersburg gave in his resignation. He resides at present in Courland, where he possesses almost the entire domains of the ancient dukes.

From generals of such character, and armies at a distance from court, and ignorant of what was passing there, nothing could be apprehended. The only corps which Paul had really to fear was the guards: for a long time these four numerous regiments, commanded by the first nobility in the empire, had viewed with alarm the approaching reign of the grand-duke, and regarded his accession as the term of their existence. Paul did not even conceal his aversion for them; and the severest reproach which he could use to his officers, and even to his soldiers, at the reviews of Gatchina and Pavlofsky, was, "Thou art fit for nothing but to serve in the guards." These troops repaid him in turn

turn the contempt he affected, and, by way of ridicule, bestowed on his soldiers the epithet of "*Prussaki*, or Prussians." It is beyond a doubt, that with these dangerous successors of the strelitzes, a slighter cause than the tears of an Elizabeth, or the caressing attentions of a Catharine, would have served to excite them to mutiny. Paul did not think himself in security till he had distributed, as we have seen, his own battalions in these formidable regiments, caressed the soldiers, and deprived the old officers of their commissions. But it was to little purpose that he lavished on them rubles and brandy: these acts of generosity gained only those who were near his person, while the army complained and murmured*.

Paul,

* Peter I. had abolished the strelitzzy (archers), but their spirit revived in the four regiments of guards, who supplied their place. The guards, consisting of picked men, whose officers were taken from the wealthiest families,

Paul, as grand-duke, hated and despised by his mother, humbled by the favorites, ridiculed by the courtiers, living in solitude, and almost forgotten under a brilliant reign, and preserving the most regular and austere manners in the midst of a corrupt and debauched court*, required few amiable qualities or virtues to make his situation pitied by men of understanding, and his reign wished for by the people. He ought to have been expected as a deliverer: he was, however, generally feared as a scourge: his domestics, his officers, his courtiers, his

milies (1), formed an army of near ten thousand men around the throne. The influence of this body was sufficient to effect a revolution, and indeed alone accomplished all that have taken place since Peter I.

* This is a piece of justice that must not be denied him; and if his attachment to the Nelidof have made him neglect his wife, it has not made him offend against decency or decorum in public, hitherto at least. The Nelidof, however, is dismissed.

(1) To be an officer in the guards, a man must prove that he possessed at least a hundred peasants or slaves.

favorites,

favorites, and even his children, dreadful to relate, partook more or less of these horrid sentiments. The suspicion he entertained, that he inspired these sentiments, doubtless exasperated him, and perhaps rendered him incapable of correcting them; but with this character, the traits of justice and goodness which sometimes appear in him, are more striking, and occasion a deeper regret for those qualities which might have been expected in him.

Before his accession, his favor was dreaded: beside its often exciting the resentment of the empress and the favorite, it was considered as the same sign of disgrace as fine weather is proverbially regarded as the constant forerunner of rain. No man has ever shewn more eccentricity and fickleness in the selection of his friends. At first, he opened himself with unbounded confidence and

and entire familiarity to the person who appeared to enter into his views; then, repenting this frankness, he regarded his friend as a dangerous character, perhaps the creature of his mother or of the favorite, who had flattered him only to betray him. Beside those on whom the slightest attentions of his wife, or the kindnesses of Benkendorf, caused the storms of his anger to fall, the empire swarmed with his banished domestics, disgraced favorites, and cashiered officers: it invariably happened, that he who had been nearest his person had most reason to complain, and he who had received most favors found himself in the end most unfortunate.

Having given some account of the ministers of Catharine, it will not be improper shortly to speak of the courtiers who were in favor with Paul on his accession, and who will certainly
continue

continue in favor for some time. It may be said with truth, in their praise and in his, that the majority of those ministers are more disinterested, and abler statesmen, than those of the old court.

The two princes Kourakin, who alternately have been in favor and disgrace with Paul*, are the two men, next to the valet-

* Alexis Kourakin had frequently been in disgrace with Paul on account of the attention and regard he always paid the grand-duchess; but the ill-humor of Paul on this score must not be ascribed to jealousy, which his character and that of his wife did not allow. Paul's ill-humor arose from political suspicions, not from love. One day, observing his wife speak low by the fire-side to prince Kourakin, he fell into a passion, and said to her, "Madam, you want to make yourself friends, and prepare to act the part of Catharine, but be assured you shall not find in me a Peter III." These inconsiderate expressions, which escaped from him in his rage, alarmed every one, and Kourakin withdrew from court. From that period the grand-duchess was more unhappy, and under

still

valet-de-chambre I have mentioned, who possess most influence, and perhaps they are persons most deserving of it. Before the death of Catharine, though powerful and rich, their employments were insignificant: one of them led a retired life, amusing himself with the cultivation of the arts and sciences, or the education of his children, and was generally respected and esteemed. His manners and habits of life were very different from those of the greater part of the Russian nobility, who dissipate their time and fortunes in vices of every kind, in gaming, in luxury, and other follies. In a

still greater restraint. The least message could not be sent to her without permission of her husband. He named those who were to offer her their arm for a walk, to make her evening party, or even to converse with her in the course of the evening. At length he found it more commodious to give her a sort of cicisbeo, who was never to quit her. Prince Neswitsky was the man whom he deemed insignificant enough for this office.

word,

word, he appeared worthy to be at the head of affairs, and he now holds that station with his brother; the one being vice-chancellor of the empire, and the other attorney-general: to them must be attributed whatever is right in the conduct of affairs.

Two young chamberlains, who fortunately were in the service of Paul when the couriers arrived with the intelligence of the death of Catharine, were suddenly metamorphosed into generals of the army, and became his first *aides-de-camp*. One is M. Rastaptschin, who owes his favor to a very ingenious letter, and who, to preserve it, must renounce three-fourths of his understanding, and one-half of himself*. The other is a young count Schuvalof, whom Paul had recently taken into favor, after having long neg-

* He has already been twice dismissed, and recalled.

lected him; and to whom he presented one of his own dresses, to serve as a model for the horse-guards, of which he appointed him major. The young man appeared at court in this habit, as if in a sack; and doubtless found himself much at his ease in it. Nothing can be more singular than the equal favor of these young persons, since it would appear that the favor of the one was sufficient to cause the disgrace of the other. Mr. Rastaptschin, some years ago, was gentleman in waiting to the grand-duke at Pavlofsky. His young associates, and, among others, count Schuvalof and prince Baratinfky, considering their employments as a difficult and hazardous service, because a word spoken to the grand-duchess, or a coat too fashionably cut, was sufficient to ruin them, absented themselves as often as possible, feigning sickness, or alleging some other excuse. Rastaptschin, tired
in

in his turn with not being relieved, wrote a sharp letter to the marshal of the court, in which he rallied his associates on the true motives which detained them at Pavlofsky ; adding, at the conclusion, “ For my own part, who
 “ have no disease to cure, nor a fair
 “ Italian finger to maintain, I will cheer-
 “ fully continue to perform their duty
 “ to the grand-duke.” These strokes of satire were aimed at Schuvalof as well as at Baratinsky, whom Paul, though his relation, could not bear. The marshal shewed this letter to the empress, who at first laughed at it; but Schuvalof and Baratinsky, thinking they had reason to be offended, required an explanation from Rastaptschin. The affair made a noise : Baratinsky was sent to the army, and Rastaptschin was banished from the court for a year. From that time the grand-duke regarded him as his champion, and

obstinately refused to accept the attendance of the other gentlemen in waiting, unless he was recalled; and accordingly, for more than a year, though they regularly came to Pavlofsky or Gatchina to offer their services, they were as regularly dismissed.

Among the favorites of the emperor, M. Pleschtscheief is a real phenomenon: he is the only one who has always kept himself at the same distance. It is true, he has never ranked in the first class of favorites; but it is also true, that he has always been exempt from storms. He is a man well-informed and respectable. He speaks several languages, possesses some knowledge of geography and government, and cultivates literature. He might even be of service to Russia, if, among his good qualities, he could reckon that of courage to speak the truth;

truth; but unfortunately his constant enjoyment of favor seems almost a moral proof of the contrary*.

M. Nieledinsky, who had been the companion of the studies and amusements of Paul, was distinguished at Petersburg for great extent of capacity, and had acquired reputation by some love sonnets not deficient in grace and sentiment. The emperor has appointed him his private secretary, but on condition, no doubt, that he strangles his muse, who has served him, however, too well to deserve so cruel a death. It is at least to be wished, that Nieledinsky may exhibit and practise the sensibility which he displays in his verses. His office is to give an account of the letters and petitions that are addressed to the emperor: the fate

* He also has at last been disgraced, and with circumstances of great cruelty.

of numerous oppressed individuals is accordingly in his hands.

M. Nicolai came into Russia as governor to the young counts Razumofsky, who afterwards were his protectors. On the recommendation of Mrs. Pretorius, his relation, waiting-maid to the duchess of Wirtemberg, he was placed near the grand-duchess in quality of secretary: he was created a baron in Germany, during the travels of the grand-duke, and became, on his accession, counsellor of state, director of the emperor's cabinet*, knight of the order of St. Anne, and received some hundreds of peasants†. He comes from

* What is called the *cabinet* in Russia is not a council of state; it is the room which contains the treasures, jewels, and private curiosities of the sovereign.

† He had before an estate in Finland, a province ceded by Sweden, where the peasants are not completely reduced to the same mode of slavery as the Russians;

from Strasbourg, and is known in Germany by some imitations of Ariosto, and other poems agreeable enough, though extremely verbose. He also has been obliged to sacrifice his muse on the altar of fortune; to which, ungrateful as he is, she had herself conducted him. I do not know if the political haughtiness, which he thinks himself obliged to maintain, render him more happy, but it does not at least give him the appearance of it.

lians; and Nicolai frequently complained of it, saying, "These wretches scarcely bring me in anything, and pretend to have rights." Those, whom he has just received, are in Poland, where he may do with them as he pleases, separate them, sell them, or make them work, like domestic animals, to embellish his gardens. From this anecdote the reader may judge what this Strasburger is become in Russia, who passes in Germany for a philosopher, and whom so many scribblers flatter as a Macænas. If he read this, no doubt he will admire the moderation with which he is mentioned.

M. Da-

M. Danorof, late librarian to the prince of Wirtemberg, and since aide-de-camp to Paul, has also become an important personage: but I abstain from speaking in detail of those with whom I am not sufficiently acquainted to form an adequate judgment of their merits. I will only remark, that in the list of preferments which the emperor has since made, I observe a number of persons deserving no other portion than the contempt and vengeance of the public.

Meanwhile it is apparent, that the persons who approach Paul are morally better than those who had access to his mother*. He is surrounded by men of
inform-

* The following piece of pleasantry will shew the opinion entertained of most of the persons in place and in favor at the court of Catharine. It occurred in a company where twelfth-day was kept in the French manner, and where the king of the night was desired to

information, and even of merit. I say
he

to dispose of the courtiers according to their talents
and capacity.

“ Zubof has never rendered any service to the
“ state, and is no longer of service to the empress, since
“ the Sapphies, Branicka, and Protasof, execute the
“ functions of his office. Let a few emetics be given
“ to him, to make him bring up what he has swal-
“ lowed; and then let him be sent to the baths of Bal-
“ dona for the recovery of his health.

“ Count N. Soltikof, president of the college of war,
“ and governor of the grand-dukes, is named presi-
“ dent of the college of physicians, and deacon of the
“ imperial chapel. He may likewise retain the wa-
“ ter-closet of the young princes, provided he shut up
“ his wife in a convent, or send her to Bridewell.

“ Count Besborodko, chief counsellor of state, &c.
“ shall be appointed cook to the court; unless he
“ had rather be director of the Lock Hospital for fe-
“ males, in which he will find all his friends.

“ Vice-chancellor Ostermann shall repair to St.
“ Denis, to replace the sword of Charlemagne, long
“ and flat as himself.

“ Prince Baratinsky, marshal of the court, shall
“ be appointed Jack Ketch. A more gentle mode of
“ putting to death, than that by the knout, is in-
“ tended

he *is*, when perhaps I ought to say he
was;

“ tended to be introduced; and he shall have the of-
“ fice of smothering and strangling in secret those that
“ are wanted to be dispatched, whether it be an em-
“ peror or his son: it is expected, however, that he do
“ not let them cry out, as he did about thirty years
“ ago.

“ Marshal Suvarof shall have a patent for dealing
“ as a butcher in human flesh; and the army shall
“ be allowed to feed on it in Poland, where nothing
“ but carcases are left.

“ A committee of *outsiteli* (tutors) shall be ap-
“ pointed to examine whether prince Yussupof be
“ able to read; if he can, he shall be appointed
“ prompter to the theatres, of which he is now ma-
“ nager.

“ Markof shall be sent ambassador to Paris, where
“ he has been already so successful. It is hoped, that
“ he will be the proper man to effect a reconciliation
“ between Russia and the French republic, since he
“ has been the scourge of the Russian and Polish jaco-
“ bins, against whom it also has declared war.

“ Samoïlof, attorney-general, shall be made one of
“ the chevalier guards, for he is a tolerably hand-
“ some man, which is a sufficient qualification for that
“ post.

“ Kon-

was; for his fickleness displays itself on every

“ Kontusof, director of the corps of cadets in the
 “ room of the worthy count of Anhalt, shall erect
 “ a monument to his predecessor, whom he studies to ri-
 “ dicule, and whom he makes us regret every day.
 “ His conduct, however, is the best panegyric on the
 “ memory of the worthy Anhalt.

“ The corps of artillery shall remain with the
 “ old general Melissino, because he is the only general
 “ in that body who understands his trade: but on con-
 “ dition, that he shall not have the management of the
 “ chest, and he do not expose his gray hair in the
 “ antichamber of the valets of the court. He is re-
 “ quested likewise to employ less artifice in his con-
 “ duct, and less smoke in his artifices.

“ Madame von Lieven, governess to the princesses,
 “ shall retain her place, though she has somewhat
 “ the air of an Amazon; but the time will come when
 “ it will not be amiss to give young princesses a little
 “ of a military air (1).

“ Countess Shuvalof, grand-mistress to the grand-
 “ duchess Elizabeth, shall likewise be confirmed; but
 “ she shall be enjoined not to let beasts only have
 “ permission to speak at the table of that young prin-
 “ cess, unless they speak with sense, as they did in
 “ Æsop's days.

(1) This time is arrived.

“ Prince

everything about him, and he does not permit merit to remain a sufficient time at his court to be corrupted*.

The prince, whom Paul appears to have chosen for the prototype of his

“ Prince Repnin, having opened the door one day
 “ when prince Potemkin called for a glass of water,
 “ that he might himself repeat this important order
 “ to the lackeys, shall receive a patent for the place of
 “ first valet-de-chambre to the favorites; a post which
 “ to him will be worth that of field-marshal. How-
 “ ever, the crown of laurel which covered his gray
 “ hair shall be taken from him, because he suffered
 “ a buffoon to trample on him without saying a word;
 “ and because the gift of a small house appeared suit-
 “ ed to him, and to console him for the insult.

“ M. Zavadofsky, director and plunderer of the
 “ bank, shall be sent into Siberia to catch fables, to re-
 “ plenish her majesty's stock of furs, which it will not
 “ long be in her power to keep up by any other means.
 “ She is already unable to furnish her family with
 “ them, and Zavadofsky is well known to be a better
 “ huntsman than financier,” &c.

* This has taken place. The princes Kourakin, and most of those whom I have named, are in disgrace at the moment of my writing this.

reign

reign and his actions, is Frederic William, father of the great king of Prussia*. The same austerity of manners, and the same passion for soldiers, are found in the Russian autocrate. For the rest, I have drawn, I conceive, the character of Paul in relating his actions; if not, the task, I confess, is above my powers. It is well known, that nothing is so difficult to paint as an infant, whose physiognomy is as yet unsettled, and it is the same with the character of an eccentric man. The most favorable plea we can make for him is, that the light of the French revolution has touched his brain, and disordered his intellects. It had already disturbed the much stronger head of his mother. It is said, that the people of Paris, crowding to see Paul, then a youth, cried, "My God, how ugly he is!" and

* This he does not allow; for he said one day, "I will be Frederic II. in the morning, and Louis XIV. at night."

that

that he had the good sense to laugh at it*. He is not improved since he is grown old, bald, and wrinkled. The empress appears by his side like one of those beautiful women who are painted with a little deformed blackamoor near them, as a contrast to their dignity and grace. The singularity which he affects in his dress, and the severity of his manners, add greatly to his deformity. Without excepting even the Kalmuks and the Kirghises, Paul is the ugliest man in his extensive dominions; and he himself considers his countenance as so

* He is greatly changed; or rather, he now dares shew himself what perhaps he was already. A poor soldier, in the agony of his sufferings under the cane by Paul's orders for a trifling fault in his exercise, cried out in despair, "Curled baldhead! curled bald-head!" The enraged autocrate gave orders that he should expire under the knout; and issued a proclamation, by which it was prohibited, under pain of the same punishment, for any one to make use of the term bald, in speaking of the head, or snubbed, in speaking of the nose.

shocking,

shocking, that he dares not impress it upon his coin*.

I shall here subjoin some traits, which will serve to describe Paul by his own actions; and will prove, that when grand-duke, he announced what we have seen of him since his accession.

Near his castle of Pavlofsky he had a terrace, from which he could see all the

* The new coins have not his effigy, but his cypher merely, with the following words of scripture, which, in such a connexion, have no meaning: "Not unto us, not unto us, but to thy name." Probably it is some device of martinism, or of *obscurantism*, which Paul patronises. It even appears, that he is going to establish this order with that of Malta, of which, to the astonishment of all Europe, he has just declared himself grand-master, at the very instant of forming an alliance with the Turks. O my friends, can you refrain from laughter? But, alas!

Quidquid delirant reges plectuntur Achivi.

centinels,

centinels, whom he delighted to station about him wherever there was room for a centry box. On this covered terrace he spent a part of each day, and observed with a spying-glass all that was passing about him. Often he sent a servant to a centinel, to order him to button or unbutton a little more of his coat, to keep his musket higher or lower, to walk at a greater or less distance from his centry box. Sometimes he would go himself nearly half a mile to give these important orders, and would cane the soldier, or put a ruble into his pocket, according as he was angry or pleased with him.

Pavlofsky was an open village, yet guards were appointed, who wrote down the names of all who entered it or went out of it, and who were obliged to tell whence they came, whither they were going

going, or what they wanted. Every evening each house was visited, to learn if there were any strangers there. Every man who wore a round hat, or had a dog with him, was arrested. The village, which had been much frequented because of its beautiful situation, soon became a desert; persons turned out of their way to avoid it; and when Paul was perceived at a distance, he was carefully shunned. These circumstances increased his displeasure and suspicions, and he often caused the persons, who thus sought to avoid him, to be pursued and questioned.

One day he put all the officers of his battalion under arrest, because they had saluted him awkwardly in filing off after their drill, and he ordered them to be called out for eight days successively to file off and salute before him, sending

them regularly back to the guard-house till they were able to perform according to his fancy.

Exercising one day his regiment of cuirassiers, the horse of an officer threw him. Paul ran furiously towards him, crying, "Get up, rascal."—"Your highness, I cannot, I have broken my leg." Paul spat upon him, and retired swearing.

Passing at another time unexpectedly and secretly by one of his guard-houses, the officer, not knowing him, did not order out his men: upon which he instantly turned back, boxed the ears of the officer, and ordered him to be disarmed, and put under arrest.

One day, travelling from Tzariko-felo to Gatschina, of which the road was in the middle of a marshy forest, he suddenly

denly recollected something, and ordered the coachman to return. "Presently, "your highness," said the coachman; "the road is here too narrow."—"How, "rascal," cried Paul, "wont you turn "immediately." The coachman, instead of answering, hastened to a spot where it was possible to comply: Paul, however, called to his equerry, and ordered him to arrest and punish the rebellious coachman. The equerry assured him, that he would turn in a moment. Paul flew into a passion with the equerry also: "You are a pitiful scoundrel like "himself," said he. "Let him overturn "the carriage, let him break my neck, "but let him obey me, and turn the "instant I command him." During the dispute the coachman succeeded in turning, but Paul had him chastised on the spot.

Since

Since his accession, one of his horses stumbled with him in one of the streets of Petersburg: he alighted immediately, held a sort of council with his attendants, and the horse was condemned to receive fifty lashes with a whip. Paul caused them to be given on the spot, before the populace, and counted himself the strokes, saying, "There, Sir, that is for having "stumbled with the emperor."

One day, when only grand-duke, he met in the gardens a man with a round hat, who wished to avoid him. Paul caused the man to be brought before him, and found that he was a clock-maker, who came to repair his time-keepers. After having at great length remonstrated with him on the indecency of round hats, he asked his wife for some pins, and raising the flaps of the hat, cocked it himself, and then

then replaced it upon the head of its owner.

To balance this multitude of absurdities, he exhibits many traits of humanity: the pensions which he has bestowed on the unfortunate, the hospitals which he has founded for his soldiers, the provisions which he distributes among his poor officers, and other acts of benevolence and justice, attest that he deserves the character rather of a capricious than a bad man.

END OF VOL. I.